

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN THE

HON. JOHN ADAMS,

II

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

AND THE LATE

WM. CUNNINGHAM, ESQ.

BEGINNING IN 1803, AND ENDING IN 1812.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY E. M. CUNNINGHAM,
Son of the late Wm. Cunningham, Esq.

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1823.

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DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO WIT:

District Clerk's Office.

SEAL. BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the eighth day of August, A. D. 1823, in the forty eighth year of the Independence of the United States of America, Ephraim May Cunningham, of the said District, has deposited in this Office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, *to wit* :

"Correspondence between the Hon. John Adams, late President of the United States and the late Wm. Cunningham, Esq beginning in 1803 and ending in 1812."

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the Copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an Act entitled, "An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the Arts of Designing, Engraving and Etching Historical, and other Prints."

JOHN W. DAVIS.

Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS correspondence is presented to the American people, with an exclusive view to their information and benefit. The seal of secrecy, which was imposed by the survivor, is broken by the triumph of death over his correspondent. It has now become the property of the public and of posterity. The Editor is influenced by a deep solicitude for the welfare of our republic, and an anxious wish, that its institutions and liberties may be transmitted to an interminable futurity. He deems it an imperative obligation upon every citizen of this great and free nation to contribute, according to his means, to the preservation and glory of this invaluable inheritance.

The history of nations, is little else, than the history of individuals; and, the existence and prosperity of the one, depend upon the purity, patriotism and public spirit of the other. In all nations, which have risen, flourished and fallen, the causes of their decline and overthrow, may be traced to individuals and families. An inordinate and unprincipled thirst for power, on the part of the few, at the expense of the many, has always been the inveterate bane of liberty—the *semen dissolutionis* of political communities.—Men are, by nature, free and equal; but, there is, among them, a perpetual tendency to inequality. Society is constantly diverging into the extremes of affluence and power, on the one hand, and penury and weakness, on the other.

The progress to these extremes, is accelerated, in direct proportion to the distance from the medium. An increase of strength, gives new energy, and every accumulation sharpens the appetite for more. On the other hand, defeat destroys confidence, and every failure paves the way to a repetition, till a great majority of mankind, sink into listlessness and indolence, and become the servile instruments of pampered power. The operation and extension of this principle, has created all those iron despotisms, which have humbled and crushed the human family.

It is the spirit and intention of our republican institutions, to correct this tendency to monopoly, and to restrain individual and family aggrandizement. In this, consists our pre-eminence, in freedom and happiness, over every other nation. It is the bulwark of our liberties. When this corrective power shall be yielded, we shall become a degraded people. It is the duty of freemen to guard it, with untiring vigilance. By a constant recurrence to first principles and an unceasing inspection and scrutiny into the conduct and characters of our distinguished men, we may hope to preserve our rights and perpetuate them to future generations. However elevated his rank—powerful his connexions—or, unlimited his hold upon the estimation and confidence of his countrymen, we should not shrink from summoning the delinquent to that tribunal, from which there is no appeal—to the tribunal of public opinion.

In times of revolutionary excitement, it is easy for a man of a restless and daring spirit, to throw himself into the stream and roll on with the tide. By activity and address, he may mould the ingredients of a community in commotion, to his own will and pleasure, and acquire power and influence with wonderful facility. The splendor of success, achieved by his associates, may throw a halo of glory round his name, and the enthusiasm of a nation, may assign him a

place among her worthies, which posterity will permit him to retain, if the mask be not removed by his subsequent career. In the hurry of events, it is impossible to form a correct estimate of his acts, and to foresee the ultimate objects of his ambition. It is only, when the storm is over, that his motives may be developed and his true character delineated.

It cannot be doubted, that the fame of Mr. Adams would have gone into future times, with a brighter train, if his public labours had ceased, with the termination of the revolution. By retirement, he might have preserved a rank in that luminous galaxy of heroes and statesmen, who achieved our independence. But, every act of his, since that epoch, has removed him farther from the proud elevation, to which a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances and the unsuspecting gratitude of an emancipated people, had raised him. It was not, however, till he became chief magistrate of the nation, that his real character and designs were known. It was now, that his aristocratical principles and selfish policy, appeared in all their hideousness. The people saw his rapid strides towards despotism, and, that he aimed to wrest from them the sovereignty and secure it to himself and family. It is unnecessary to recount the obnoxious acts of his administration ; for, they are fresh in the recollection of every citizen. It is in vain to attempt to charge the odium of this reign of terror upon his constitutional counsellors ; for, the maxim, that "the king can do no wrong," is not recognised in our political creed. The Executive, possessed of the appointing power, and having a negative upon the legislature, is amenable to the nation, for the policy and practice of the government. The eyes of the people are directed to the Supreme Head ; and, notwithstanding its immense patronage and influence, which are calculated to dazzle and blind the million, Mr. Adams,

clothed, as he was, with the revolutionary mantle, could not sustain the scrutiny. The voice of a free people, called him from power and consigned him to the shades of Quincy, where it would have been well for his future fame, if he had devoted the remnant of his years, to the cultivation of his farm and of philosophy. But his feelings and principles and desires, were not fashioned upon the model of the Roman Cincinnatus. The shadow of departed glory, lingered in his fancy, and stars and diadems still danced on his vision. He saw in every object around him, engraven in capitals, the memento, *NON SUM, QUOD FUI.*

It is well observed, that the truest delineations and traits of human character, are found in private intercourse and in familiar correspondence. Here, the mind discharges its sentinels—the heart is liberated from the restraints of policy and affectation—and, the whole man unbends and displays the ingredients of his composition, and speaks the language of his real feelings and sentiments. It is in this plain and unclouded mirror, that the American people may now behold the character, who once presided over their destinies, and who assumes to be their political father.

It will be seen through the whole tenor of this correspondence, that, in the estimation of Mr. Adams, no person in the nation, of any party, is entitled to consideration or credit, except himself and his son, who, when appointed to an important office, “*is banished, because he is too just!*”—They seem to be specially designed by providence, to take this infant nation into their keeping, and to hold her in safe leading-strings, through successive generations. Thrice happy America, for possessing such a race ! How blind and infatuated, for entrusting the reins, for a moment, to such ignoble hands as Jefferson and Madison !

From the letters written in 1803 and 4, it appears, that Mr. Adams' imagination was incessantly disturbed by the

grisly goblin of Democracy. This monster had broken the chains, with which, he had been bound, in his reign, and was now stalking through the nation, and leading the people to seduction and ruin. The same uneasy and unhallowed ambition, which characterised him, in public, pursued him to his retreat. Envy, jealousy and resentment, burned in his bosom; and, he conceived the herculean project of prostrating the reputation of his successor, and of raising himself and his family upon the ruins of republicanism. His immediate friends and *connexions*, and the newspaper scribblers of the day, at his instigation, embarked in the business of calumny, and the administration of Jefferson, was assailed, with a venom and virulence, unparalleled in the annals of any other age or nation. He affected to shudder at the calamities, which the *infidel* President was preparing for his country; and, an appeal was made to the religion and morality of the people, to avert the impending desolation. The torrents of abuse and defamation, which were poured out, with unsparing profusion, upon the republican chief, may be traced, with unerring certainty, to the prolific fountain at Quincy. The federalists were upbraided with the charge of apathy and indifference to public concerns, for not coming to the attack, with more zeal and fury and devotion to their prostrate leader. "Anecdotes from memory," conjured up in the dark caverns of spleen and resentment, were furnished to be wrought into political essays, and palmed, for facts, upon the nation.

Amidst all this confusion and war of elements, Jefferson stood, like Atlas, upon a broad and immovable basis, with his head in clear sunshine, above the clouds. His administration was energetic, without armies—dignified, without gag-laws—and, the treasury abundant, without direct taxes. The principles of the Constitution, went into complete and harmonious operation, and the resources of the

country, were developed, to the credit of this, and to the admiration of other nations. Religion and her altars were preserved from profanation—temples of literature and science were founded and patronized—and, an immense population spread into the western wilderness, carrying the habits of industry and enterprize, and the principles of civil liberty. The people flocked to the republican standard; and, the result of the second election, demonstrated, that republican principles had taken deep root in their affections.

The game was up. Republicanism could not be overthrown; and, we hear nothing more from our correspondent, about the abandoned “Rake, Democracy.” A long and portentous silence ensues, interrupted occasionally by a small gun in the shape of a poetical lampoon, which, like the scattered fire of a retreating enemy, shews more of imbecile malice, than of magnanimous courage.

It would be a curious investigation to look minutely into the chasm of years, in this correspondence. But, the secret workings of the passions—the humbled pride—the stiled hatred and resentment—the writhings and agonies of conflicting desires, must be left to conjecture. The result only is known. Unconquerable ambition gained a victory, *et omnia alia cedant*. To this triumphant passion, truth, consistency, former principles, and gratitude to former friends, associates and supporters, must yield.

Mr. Adams has laid it down as a principle* that “if a family, which has been high in office, and splendid in wealth falls into decay, from profligacy, folly, vice or misfortune, they generally turn Democrats, and court the lowest of the people, with an ardour, an art, a skill and consequently with a success, which no vulgar Democrat can attain.” Upon this principle, the irrevocable decision is taken, and conversion to democracy is re-

* Vide Letter VI.

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solved upon, as the only means of recovery, by his family, of departed power. It does not appear, whether this, conversion was a gradual work, or whether it came in a blaze of lightning like that of his “exemplar Paul.”* The only account furnished by Mr. Adams, is, “they cannot sink me lower than the bottom, and I have been safely landed there these eight years.” “I will *not* die for *nothing*,” and “my SONS are very much delighted, that I have taken the subject up.” The speculation was without hazard.—Nothing to lose; but the possibility, if not the prospect of “a success, which no *vulgar* Democrat can attain”? Who would not embark with such odds in his favour?

The time for the explosion arrives—the volcano bursts, and red-hot streams of lava are poured through the columns of the Boston Patriot, sweeping away characters, and burying the peace of families, in their march. The destroying spirit has gone forth; and, nothing can arrest his career. The sanctuary of the dead is violated. The ashes of him, who once wielded the sword, and fought our battles by the side of our Washington—Those ashes, which once were animated by the celestial fire of genius and eloquence, are drawn from their repose and scattered in the winds. The distinguished individuals of the party, which raised him to power, now that its ascendancy is gone, have become “British Bears and Tory Tigers,” and must be hunted down. The French have become a very clever people; but, John Bull has turned his dreadful eye-balls upon us, and will ere long trample us in the dust. “Democracy” has become a Deity and its “Islam” a vicegerent,—and, “I and Jefferson have always been friends”—*Ecce, nos, poma natamus!*

My countrymen, it would be trifling with your feelings to pursue the analysis further. It would be offering indignity

* No irreverent allusion to the apostle, is intended. Mr. A. uses the expression in application to himself.

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to your good sense and discernment, to draw the inferences and explain the great end and design of this and a simultaneous conversion. They are written in flaming characters upon the front of the transaction. Let the voice of reason and of patriotism be heard. They make their solemn appeal, to the democracy of Maine—to the republicans of New-Hampshire—to the freemen of the Green Mountains—to the whole people of this nation, to pause and consider, whether it be safe to engraft a Scion of this old Stock in our tree of liberty—where, it might shoot up in rank luxuriance and overshadow and destroy it.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTER I.

QUINCY, Nov. 28th, 1803.

Dear Sir,

I received on Saturday your favour of the 21st—had before received the copy of your Oration, which you mention in it, and since that, have received the other, that you sent first. For all these favours I thank you.

The Brochure, which contains much valuable matter, I have read with a lively interest, and high pleasure. I wish I had patience, and leisure, however, to make a few friendly remarks. But, as I have not, I shall confine myself to one or two questions. The first is, have you not fallen too deeply in love with Mr. Ames' style? The second is, where you found your authority for your quotation in (n. p. 10) page 31 and 32, which you say is from Mr. Jefferson's Letter to Judge Wythe, 1776. I never knew nor heard

of any letter to Judge Wythe from Jefferson. The words quoted, viz:—"The dignity and stability of Government in all its branches," &c. are taken from my letter to Judge Wythe, in 1776.

Some time in January or February, I believe, in 1776, or if I am mistaken in the recollection of the month, certainly, very early in that year, I wrote the pamphlet in question, which Richard Henry Lee procured to be printed by Dunlap, in Philadelphia, under the title of *Thoughts on Government*, in a Letter from a Gentleman to his friend.—Being applied to by a printer many years after, I gave permission to re-print it, with my name, who wrote it, and Mr. Wythe's, to whom it was written. By the quotation you make, I suspect that some rascal has reprinted it, and imputed it to the name of Mr. Jefferson.

I wish you success, Sir, in your literary pursuits and all others, and am, with kind regards to your family, your most obedient servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. William Cunningham.

LETTER II.

FITCHBURG, *Dec. 2, 1803.**Dear Sir,*

I duly received your favour of the 28th ult. I know your time is much employed, yet, I cannot restrain the wish, that you would have “patience and leisure to make the friendly remarks” which arose on the perusal of my performance. I am sufficiently sensible of inaccuracies to be admonished, for the future, against too much confidence in my own information. A friendly eye to discover faults, and a friendly hand to correct them, are benefits which a just precaution recommends to writers of more accuracy and of better advantages than myself.

In answer to the two questions proposed in your letter, I say—That if my style is like Mr. Ames’, I may with truth assert, that I am not a copyist. I think myself tolerably well acquainted with the merits of Mr. Ames: while I admire the strength of his imagination, I must say that I think it greater than the solidity of his judgment: I am deeply sensible of obligation for your friendly hint.

My authority for the quotation (n. p. 10) is the federal prints. If my memory is faithful, the letter to Judge Wythe has been imputed to Jefferson in a number of them. I found the extract I used in Thomas' Massachusetts Spy, which is generally considered correct:—I here-with forward the paper for your inspection. I cannot conceal my mortification at not being informed of the *real* author of the letter; nor can I suppress my indignation at the intention, or incautiousness which steals from one and cheats another. If you would suggest a method for the correction of the error in my publication, I would most readily conform to it.

Permit me to renew remembrances to your family, and to assure you of my being, with profound respect,

Dear Sir,

Your most Ob't. Serv't.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

*Hon. John Adams,
Quincy.*

LETTER III.

FITCHBURG, *Jan. 10, 1804.**Dear Sir,*

I have ascertained that Mr. Adams' Sermon at the **Dudleian Lecture** was not published; a copy was deposited in the archives of the University, agreeably to the will of Judge **Dudley**. I am informed, in a letter from the Rev'd. Mr. **Cushing**, of **Ashburnham**, that it was a laboured discourse on the validity of **Presbyterian Ordination**, for which Mr. Adams was much complimented.

I have for some time been collecting materials to present the Public with a full view of the character and conduct of Mr. **Jefferson**. I am informed that such a work is preparing by Mr. **Colman** of **New-York**, under the eye of Gen: **Hamilton**. If I should really find the design in better hands, I shall relinquish it. I am, at present, encouraged by the promised aid and patronage of some valuable friends. If I should proceed in the work, the time most favourable for effect at the ensuing election will be chosen for its appearance.

I wish to discover every arcanum that would be of use to develope the true character of the Salt Mountain Philosopher. This mountain has increased the wonders of the world to eight, and, if Mr. Jefferson would sink a tomb in a part of it for himself, it might, better than being a Mummy, preserve his body and memory through succeeding ages.

But to return. No man living has so thorough a knowledge of Mr. Jefferson's transactions as yourself—it is necessary, therefore, to the perfection of my plan, that I should assume the confidence to apply to you for some particulars. If, Sir, to promote my patriotic purposes, you would refer me to interesting incidents in Mr. Jefferson's career, I promise most seriously that no indiscretion or unfaithfulness in me shall expose or abuse your goodness.

In the year 1800, I wrote, Sir, a lengthy outline of yourself. It was first published in the Providence Gazette, and was copied into most of the federal papers thro' the Union : It has, perhaps, passed your perusal. It was acknowledged by gentlemen, who had been long in public life, to contain some facts which were not previously of notoriety ; and I was assured, parti-

cularly by Judge Bourne, that it essentially served the federal cause at the Presidential election in Rhode Island, where I then resided. I have rather mentioned this to refer you to a specimen of the manner in which the work contemplated will be executed than from any personal views; tho' I will not dissemble that my exertions and my admiration would not be abated by your auspices, but they would give activity and animation to both.

I have the honor to be, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

P. S.—If it would be more agreeable to disclose yourself in conversation than in writing, I would do myself the honor of waiting on you.

LETTER IV.

QUINCY, Jan. 16, 1804.

Dear Sir,

I ought to acknowledge my fault in having two of your kind letters to answer at once. I return you with thanks, Mr. Thomas's Spy, in which my poor "Thoughts on Govern-

ment" are wickedly and libelously imputed to "*the greatest man in America!*" This was received in your letter of Dec. 2d.

I thank you for the trouble you have taken to ascertain that Mr. Zabdiel Adams's Sermon on the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination, was not printed.

I would not advise you to relinquish the project you have in hand, because another has the same. If the two persons you name, are engaged in such a work, you may depend upon it, no good will come of it. There will be so many little passions and weak prejudices, so little candor and sincerity in it, that the dullest reader will see through it. The Cincinnati and the Essex Juntas, and there is one of these in every State, will cry it up, but the louder they extol it, the less influence it will have in the nation. The jealousy of the people, will be excited and not without reason, when they see the President of the Cincinnati arranging his forces, in battle array, though it be but a war of the quill, against the Presidents of the United States, one after another.

You are much mistaken when you say that “no man living has so much knowledge of Mr. Jefferson’s transactions as myself.” In truth I know but little concerning him. You will see by the Journals, that he came first into Congress in autumn, 1775: but he never stayed long in that assembly. During the short visit he made us, he and I agreed very well in sentiments and votes and were very good friends, but he never took any share in public debates; in Nov. 1777 I left Congress, and was appointed to go to Europe. During my absence, I had no correspondence with him, nor information concerning him, till in 1784 he came to Europe, united with me and Dr. Franklin in fifteen Commissions; and full powers to treat with all or nearly all the powers of Europe in these Commissions. We acted together for one year; but as he lived in Paris and I at Auteuil, three or four miles asunder, we met together seldom, but on business. Although we agreed always very well, there was no very close intimacy between us. In 1785 I was sent to England, where he made me a visit, as he afterwards did in Holland: but there was never any sparring between us. nor

much communication but by letters of no great interest.

After his return from Europe, he was Secretary of State for a short time, and afterwards Vice-President for four years: but I had little intercourse with him, except in common civilities. He always professed great friendship for me, even when, as it now appears, he was countenancing Freneau, Bache, Duane and Callender.

No information could be obtained from me sufficient to compensate you for a journey:—
But if you shall be in Boston on other affairs, a visit from you will be always agreeable.

The outline you mention I never saw, the editors in Rhode-Island seldom sent me their papers. I should like to see it very well.

Anecdotes from my memory would certainly be known. There are some there known only to him and me, but they would not be believed, or at least they would be said to be not believed, and would be imputed to envy, revenge or vanity. I wish him no ill. I envy him not. I SHUDDER AT THE CALAMITIES, WHICH I FEAR HIS CONDUCT IS PREPARING FOR HIS COUNTRY: FROM A MEAN THIRST

OF POPULARITY, AN INORDINATE AMBITION, AND A WANT
OF SINCERITY.

I write in confidence in your honor as well
as your discretion, being your hearty well wish-
er.

J. ADAMS.

*Mr. Wm. Cunningham,
Fitchburg.*

LETTER V.

FITCHBURG, *Feb. 15, 1804.*

Dear Sir,

I duly received your esteemed favor of the 16th ult. I assure you without reserve, that I shall not misuse nor abuse the confidence you repose in me.

By the first opportunity I had, after the receipt of your letter, I sent to Mr. Russell of Boston for a paper containing the *outline* that you have so flatteringly expressed a wish to see. Expecting, post after post, to receive the paper, I have delayed an answer to your obliging letter—Either he has not forwarded me a paper or it has miscarried. I have now transcribed, and have enclosed, a copy from the man-

uscript. I notice a few marks in the manuscript which indicate, that when it was transcribed for the press a few trifling variations were made—an incorrectness in one of the dates was rectified. I wrote it under very considerable disadvantages, and its publication was hastened for the purposes mentioned in my last respects. I am very sensible of its insufficiency to do you justice, but of its adequacy to the proof of my high esteem, I feel the strongest confidence, and on that consideration, I allow myself hopes of your favourable reception of it.

I have taken leave to send you herewith a copy of my Eulogy upon the death of your illustrious predecessor in the Presidency.

Permit me to use this occasion to present my most cordial regards to your family.

With perfect respect I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Hon. John Adams.

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LETTER VI.

QUINCY, Feb. 24, 1804.

Dear Sir,

I have received your favour of the 15th, with its enclosures. I thank you for the out-

line, as well as the eulogy. I am sorry you had the trouble of transcribing the former, which I see was written, as the Italians speak, *con amore*. Speaking of the classification of scholars in our College before the revolution, you consider rank and wealth as anti-republican principles of precedence. Is this correct? About five and forty years ago, I was in company with the oldest Colonel, John Chandler, of Worcester, when a newspaper was brought in, containing an account of the last elections in Rhode-Island. All the principal magistrates were of ancient families. The old gentleman's comment upon it, was this—"I have always been of opinion, that in popular governments the people will always choose their officers from the most ancient and respectable families." This has been the case generally in Connecticut as well as Rhode-Island, and in every republican government, in Greece and Rome and Modern Italy, in Switzerland and Geneva. The more democratical the government, the more universal has been the practice. *If a family, which has been high in office, and splendid in wealth, falls into decay, from profligacy, folly, vice, or misfortune, they*

generally turn democrats, and court the lowest of the people with an ardour, an art, a skill, and consequently with a success, which no vulgar democrat can attain. If such families are numerous, they commonly divide. Some adhere to one party, some to another, so that which ever prevails, the country still finds itself governed by them. Consider the conduct of the Winthrops, in this State, the Livingstons, in New-York, the Madisons, in Virginia, &c. The whole power and popularity of Virginia, I am told, is now in the family connections of Mr. Madison. You are young, and have much time to observe and to reflect. In theory, all governments profess to regard merit alone, but in practice, democratical governments certainly regard it as little as any. You see I have reason to repeat my intimations of confidence.

It certainly was never any “humiliation” to me to see thirteen of my classmates preceding me. I never thought much upon that subject.

Have you seen Mr. _____’s Manifesto, proposing Mr. Sullivan for Governor, and Mr. Heath for Lieutenant Governor. With what inimitable power of face it is written! These

people talk with as much gravity and solemnity as if they thought they spoke truth. Do you know the character of Mr. _____? I have had some experience of his intrigues.— Talents he has: But candour and sincerity belong to other people. Cool, dispassionate, and deliberate insidiousness never arrived at greater perfection.

With kind regard, I am, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

*Mr. William Cunningham,
Fitchburg.*

LETTER VII.

FITCHBURG, *March 9th, 1804.*

Dear Sir,

The unusual obstructions to travelling, prevented my receiving your favor of the 24th ult. till a day or two ago. I am sensible to that discernment, which has discovered in the “*con amore*” of the Italians, the real temper in which I wrote the outline. I wish it had been more just to you, and that I could find encouragement, now, that the public attention is en-

gaged in designating a President, to bring it before the public in a more finished form.—This Sir, is the spontaneous effusion of my feelings. Your goodness will, I trust, excuse it. Under no circumstances, should I scarcely dare to ask the approbation even of your silence to such an intention.

Accept, too, dear Sir, my grateful acknowledgments for describing the causes and the course, which produce and guide the leading democrats. I read with avidity, and treasure up with care, the counsels of wisdom and experience. The awful spirit of democracy was never so prevalent, nor in so great progress in our country, as at the present day.

The “manifesto” I had seen, but was unacquainted with the author. An “inimitable power of face” indeed, have they, that can persist in such exploded falsehoods, with such brassiness. Seriously would I advise them to sell their visages to the coppersmiths, to be made into boilers for Sal Montanum.

Of Mr. _____ I have no knowledge, and but little information. I think I have heard the *Duke of Berkshire* describe him, as possess-

ed of that restless and aspiring ambition, which, disregarding means, would raise him to a post in government, or cause his suspension between the posts of ignominy.

Judge Sullivan is as great a trimmer and time-server as, perhaps, can be found. He has long angled in the dirty water of democracy, but has never filled his net, though he has several times broken it.

His eye has been, and is, steadily fixed on the chair of state. At first, he courted assistance from the Clergy; but now, I expect, he means to make a push upon pure jacobinick principles. I have never seen any thing from his hand that contained so much designing meanness, as his "Sketch of the Life of Samuel Adams." His present nomination unfolds his designs, and we see that the baits thrown out are swallowed. He may blame his friends for a most unfortunate designation of an associate. The ponderosity of the "Marquis of Granby" would keep any one from rising who is attached to him. The "sweat," which "our General" says has profusely fallen from his face, has watered many a plant of renown; but the fruits

of them all, are not worth a mess of green peas, and, he is so strongly tainted with the cow-yard, that he must, I think, be offensive in the Council chamber.

There may be more severity than good sense, or prudence, in these remarks, but I really consider such clod-pated politicians as fit subjects for the most cutting strokes.

With sincere and cordial remembrances to your family, I am, with the highest regard, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Hon. John Adams.



LETTER VIII.

QUINCY, *March 15, 1804.*

Dear Sir,

Your favor of the 9th is received. I beg you would not say a word about me in relation to the subject which you say now engages the public attention. I am no match for these times, nor for the actors who now tread the stage. You say, the awful spirit of democracy is in great progress. I believe it, and I know something of the nature of it. It is a

young rake who thinks himself handsome and well made, and who has little faith in virtue.— When the people once admit his courtship, and permit him the least familiarity, they soon find themselves in the condition of the poor girl, who told her own story in this affecting style.

Le Lendemain il osa davantage :
 Il me promit Le Foi de mariage.
 Le Lendemain ... il fut entreprenant.
 Le Lendemain il me fit un enfant.

The next day he grew a little bolder—but promised me marriage. The next day—he began to be enterprising: But the next day—O Sir! the next day he got me with child.

Democracy is Lovelace, and the people are Clarissa. The artful villain will pursue the innocent lovely girl to her ruin and her death.— We know that some gentleman will arise at last, who will put the guilty wretch to death in a duel. But this will be no friend of the lady. Perhaps a son, a pupil or a bosom friend of Lovelace, himself. The time would fail me to enumerate all the Lovelaces in the United States. It would be an amusing romance to compare their actions and characters with his. The fed-

eralists appear to me to be very inattentive to public events as well as characters. Mr. Sullivan's writings in the newspapers during the whole of the last year, under feigned signatures, his biographical sketch of Mr. Samuel Adams, and especially his pamphlet on the constitutional freedom of the press, have never been regarded, nor, that I know of, seen or read. The pamphlet ought to be read. There are good things in it, as well as notable traits of the character of the author. In all these writings his ambitious views are written with sunbeams. It will be a great thing, if brother Langdon should be governor of New-Hampshire, and Sullivan, the second governor Sullivan, in New-England. I dont wonder he was not willing that the noble family of Sullivan should be shut up in a hole. His ambition, if it were of a right character ought not to be censured. There is an honorable, laudable and virtuous ambition, but it is always attended with candor, sincerity and veracity. With an abundance of laborious application, with an ardent imagination, and a tenacious, though inaccurate memory, with a volatility of eloquence, and a great deal of art—

which, however, never could conceal his art, there are faults in him, which, unless the people are more degenerated than I believe they are, will forever prevent him from being a successful rival to Mr. Strong. If he lives, I believe he will tease the national or state government into some appointment of him, to something or other; for, his modesty is but a very little restraint upon his solicitations.

You see, I still confide in your discretion, being, with esteem and regard, your very humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

*Mr. William Cunningham, Jr.
Fitchburg.*

LETTER IX.

FITCHBURG, Sept. 19, 1808.

Dear Sir,

In a letter which I had the pleasure some time since, to receive from you, you expressed some reproof of the inactivity of the Federalists. Their conduct at present, is not liable to such a censure; perhaps it may deserve the

reproach of intemperate ardour. The zeal of party has certainly attempted to overbear the freedom of private opinion, and even totally to overthrow the character of him who would exercise that right—these are among the consequences of party rage, and they are deeply to be deprecated.

I have read every thing which has appeared concerning the Embargo, and I lament, most sincerely, that the bitterness of rebuke, so often manifested towards your son, has been extended to yourself. Of the course of Mr. John Quincy Adams, I have been an attentive observer, and have never discovered in him a deviation from sound principles; if he had given his assent to the Embargo, under a limitation of its duration, it would, perhaps, have been better. As a pause for deliberation, in a moment of peculiar peril, I have thought the embargo necessary; but, for an independent nation, great, rich and powerful, alarmed at the edicts of foreign courts, to break up at once, and forever, the usages which had grown habitual, and of which their natural situation was the origin and nurse, would be an extremity that

no circumstances could excuse. That, such a measure would be opposed by your son, his resolution, introduced into the senate, soon after the imposition of the embargo, is ample proof. The necessity for a temporary inhibition of our trade, indeed the exceptionable edicts themselves, arose, from the imbecility, which ensued from the previous mismanagement of our affairs. Thinking favourably of the conduct of Mr. Adams, I commenced, in January last, some papers which to number six, were published in Boston. In the seventh number, I defended his conduct—descanted on his talents, and hinted at the policy of his selection by the federalists, as their candidate for the first in the magistracy of the nation. This number, the editors refused to publish, and my knuckles were rapped for having written it. The project of a coalition with the Clintonians, I have always condemned. If a candidate cannot be found who is popular on the other side on the bare reputation of being their friend, without, in fact, being on any side, but that of his country, I should much prefer to have General Pinckney opposed to Mr. Madison, even against a possibility of

success. I know not, dear sir, what your opinions are on the present state of our affairs. To a report, which is current in this part of the country, that you are on the side of the executive, through the whole of his administration, I oppose the history and maxims of your life.

May I take the freedom to ask of you, your opinion on the public measure which has so agitated our Country ? I take some confidence, in making this enquiry, from the circumstance, that you have confided to me opinions, interesting as any can be, which you may express on the Embargo. The answer with which you may favour me, shall be added to the stock of my port folio, subject to no other disposition than what the deepest solicitude for your fame may hereafter dictate.

Please to make my most cordial remembrances acceptable to Mrs. Adams, and your family.

With veneration and esteem.

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Hon. John Adams.

LETTER X.

QUINCY, *Sept. 27th, 1808.**Dear Sir,*

The papers to number six, which you mention in your kind letter of the 19th, I have never seen nor heard. In what paper or pamphlet were they published?

The federalists, I think, might suffer my old lamp to go out, without administering their nauseous oil merely to excite a momentary flash, before it expires.

Do you think the federalists believe themselves, when they say, that I am on the side of the executive, through the whole of his administration? Do they believe that I approve of the repeal of the Judiciary law, which I recommended to Congress? which I believe to be one of the best of laws? which was made by the advice and repeated solicitations of the Judges, for several years? which I took infinite pains to organize with a selection of the ablest men and fairest characters in the nation? a repeal, which I always believed to be *a violation of the constitution*? Do they believe that I ap-

prove of the neglect and mismanagement of the navy? The omission to build more ships? The neglect to fortify our most important cities and exposed places? Do they believe that I approve of the repeal of the taxes, which would have enabled us not only to make the necessary preparations against the formidable dangers that surrounded us, but gradually to diminish the national debt? Do they believe that I approve of the *removals* of so many of the *best men*, or the *appointments* of so many of *the worst*? Do they believe, that I approve of twenty other things, too many to be enumerated? Oh no! They believe no such things. But they are conscious, they have injured me and mine, and are only forging false and awkward excuses for it.

It is true, I have not joined in the clamour against the purchase of Louisiana, because I know, that if the union of the northern, southern, and western states was to continue, the free navigation of the Mississippi was essential to its preservation. I have not joined in the clamour against gun-boats, *though I despise them*, because I thought gun-boats better than nothing, and because, I thought the government

ought not to be opposed in any measures of defence merely because they would not adopt such as I thought the best. I have not clamoured against the embargo, because I thought it a necessary temporary measure, well knowing that it could not be of long duration. I agree with you, that it ought to have been limited to some period. Any long continuance of it, is not conformable to my feelings or judgment. I had much rather hear a cry in Congress, like that which has so often sounded in the British Parliament, "Who shall dare to set limits to the commerce and naval power of this country?" In refusing to acknowledge a right in Great Britain to impress seamen from our ships, in opposing and resisting the decrees and orders of France and England, in resisting the outrages and hostilities committed upon us, the administration have my hearty wishes for their success.

You have read in Thompson's *Liberty* :—

" Amidst the low murmurings of submissive fear
And mingled rage, my Hambden rais'd his voice,
And to the laws appeal'd."

Mingled fear and rage are now the predominant

passions of our nation, and such is the noise and fury, that the still small voice of reason cannot be heard. *If I were only forty years old, I might have enthusiasm enough to hope that I could ride in the whirlwind.* But at seventy-three it would be delirium.

I have nothing to hope or wish but repose, and they will not allow me even that small consolation.

As I am not consulted by any party or any individual, I take no share, and very little interest, in the approaching election. Hamilton's ambition, intrigues, and caucusses have ruined the cause of federalism, by encumbering and entangling it with men and measures, that ought never to have been brought forward. I have no objection to Pinckney, but a full persuasion that he never can rise to the chair, and, a more complete conviction still, that he ought never to have been nominated for it.

As you have mentioned my son, I shall take the liberty to say, that his conduct, as far as I know it, has been able, upright, candid, impartial and independent. His letter to Mr. Otis, I applaud and admire. His resignation I approve.

He would have been more politic if he had declined his invitation to the caucus, though the question was only between Mr. Madison and Mr. Monroe, and knowing both, I should certainly, as he did, prefer the former to the latter.

The policy of a limitation to the embargo, is, in a national view, and on a large scale, a nice question. I should, probably, have been for it, but there is so much to be said on the other side, that I cannot censure my son for agreeing to it, without limitation, believing as he did and had reason to believe, that it would soon be repealed. The Federalists, by their intolerance, have gone far towards justifying, or at least excusing, Jefferson for his; and for the future, it seems to be established as a principle, that our government is forever to be, not a national but a party government. How long such a maxim can be maintained consistently with any civil government at all, time will determine. While it lasts, all we can hope is, that in the game at leap frog, once in eight or twelve years, the party of the outs will leap over the head and shoulders of the ins; for, I own to you, I have so little confidence in the wisdom, prudence or

virtue of either party, that I should be nearly as willing that one should be absolute and unchecked as the other.* Thus, sir, I have given you some hints of my general views of things, *but I wish to remain in obscurity, and by no means to become the subject of conversation or speculation.*

My family returns your compliments to yours with your friend,

JOHN ADAMS.

*Mr. William Cunningham,
Fitchburg.*

* *The following note, in the hand-writing of Mr. Adams' correspondent, is appended to the original letter from Mr. A.*

“ Mr. Adams has since determined which of these parties he would have ‘absolute and unchecked,’ although it appears by this very letter, that the party he would now have dominant, have *violated the constitution*, and done many reprehensible acts. And he has so far got the better of the ‘delirium of seventy-three’ that he has mounted the seat of Phaeton to guide the chariot of fire through the murmurs of submissive fear and mingled rage.”



LETTER XI.

FITCHBURG, Oct. 5th, 1808.

Dear Sir,

The papers, to which you have obligingly asked a more particular reference,

were published in the Palladium, with the signature of Chatham. I deemed their composition in a higher strain than my principles suggested, to be necessary to arrest the public attention. In moments of peculiar excitement, the ruling passion is frequently the only avenue through which sober reflections can be conveyed to the judgment; and, that pass is often times best secured by a vapouring herald; but bold and boisterous as mine was, delusion kept the ground against him. My design, as I communicated it in the envelope of my first number, was to shew that neither Mr. Jefferson, nor a convert to his crude opinions, would be proper to preside over this commercial nation—and, to an enlarged view of commerce, I intended to add an illustration of its advantages by examples. Objections to Mr. Jefferson, brought after them an obligation to specify the qualifications, which, a free, opulent and independent people should regard in the choice of their chief magistrate. These qualifications are, I conceive, eminently combined in Mr. J. Q. Adams. I spoke of him on a thorough acquaintance with his political course; and it did not

escape me, that he was the first writer in this country, who publicly arraigned the pretensions of Genet, and that his appointment to the Hague was the well earned, but unsolicited reward of his extrication of the Executive from the embarrassments and perplexities in which he was involved by the bold and extraordinary proceedings of that hair-brained and contagious revolutionist. But, in addition to a competent capacity, an indication should be taken from the temper of the times, in which there may be something either to impede or facilitate "the march of great talents." From this consideration, the pretensions of Mr. J. Q. A. derived vast accession ; it appeared to me, as if Providence in favour, had caused proof of his patriotism and independence to spring out of his integrity, in a trying situation, for the very purpose of ensuring to his virtues a passage to the Presidency. It was for acting conformably to these impressions that I met the repulse I have before related. The declination of the editors to print the panegyric, was graciously enough expressed, in a letter—it was by others, that I was reprimanded.

In a succeeding number to that which contained the exceptionable matter above, (for I sent two numbers at once) I was so unfortunate as to provoke censure for advancing what is now considered an indefensible tenet in politics. In opposition to the opinion of a sprightly author, who has lately appeared with the signature of Espriella, I asserted it to be politic in a nation, to associate manufactures with their trade, and that it was not too soon to begin, in this country, to link them together. Denied a vehicle for such speculations, I discontinued writing them. The frankness, sir, with which you have replied to my letter of the 19th ult. encourages me to seek an elucidation of an event, the causes of which I have never seen publicly unfolded, and, which Col. Pickering has nearly pronounced inexplicable—I mean his dismission. In his last printed letter, he says, you never told him what it was for ! I was in Philadelphia soon after that transaction, where I heard it accounted for in the following manner : That Mr. Liston, expressing to the Secretary his apprehensions of another mission to France, was quieted by the Secretary's assurances that

another would not be made—That, when another mission was soon after concluded on, his aversions to any farther negociation with France were so untameable, and so indecorously expressed, as to render him an unfit medium for the communications between the two governments, and unsuitable to remain in a ministerial station. As this explanation furnished adequate reasons for his dismission, I was easy with it, but it cannot give me the satisfaction of your own exposition.

I have taken the freedom to enclose a newspaper, which contains, on its first page, some observations written by me on the manufacture of cider, which may, possibly, amuse.

With veneration and esteem,

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

Quincy, Mass.

LETTER XII.

QUINCY, Oct. 15, 1808.

Dear Sir,

The information in your last letter, to look in the Palladium for certain specula-

tions, is very agreeable. As I have never subscribed for that paper, I have never read them. Indeed I seldom see it. Your friendship for J. Q. Adams, encourages me to say, that Washington was indeed under obligations to him, for turning the tide of sentiment against Genet, and he was sensible of it and grateful for it. The enthusiasm for Genet and France and the French revolution, was at that time, almost universal throughout the United States, but, in Pennsylvania, and especially in Philadelphia, the rage was irresistible. Mifflin, M'Kean, and all the principal popular men in that state, were openly for war against England in alliance with France. Marat, Robespierre, Bressot, and the Mountain, were the constant themes of panegyric and the daily toasts at table. Gov. Mifflin invited me to dine with him; Genet and his suite were there, with many others of the principal men of Philadelphia. The Governor gave for a toast,—“The ruling powers in France;— May the United States of America, in alliance with them, declare war against England.” Mifflin perceived, that I did not drink his toast, and, as I sat next to him, he whispered to me in a

friendly way, “I know I shall be too high for you, and therefore no offence will be taken if you withdraw from the company.” I accordingly took French leave. Jonathan Dickenson Sargeant and Dr. Hutchinson, two old revolutionary Americans, extremely popular, put themselves at the head of the mob. Washington’s house was surrounded by an innumerable multitude, from day to day, huzzaing, demanding war against England, cursing Washington, and crying success to the French patriots and virtuous republicans. Frederic A. Muhlenburg, the speaker of the house of representatives, toasted publicly,—“The Mountain, may it be a pyramid that shall reach the skies.” J. Q. Adams’ writings first turned this tide; and, the yellow fever completed the salvation of Washington. Sargeant and Hutchinson died of it. I was assured soon after by some of the most sensible, substantial, and intelligent of the Quakers, that nothing but the yellow fever saved Washington from being dragged out of his house, or being compelled to declare war against England. Not all Washington’s ministers, Hamilton and Pickering included, could have written those papers,

which were so fatal to Genet. Washington saw it, and felt his obligations. He took great pains to find out their author. The first notice I had, of his design to appoint my son to a mission abroad, was from his secretary of state, Randolph, who told me he had been ordered to enquire of the members of congress, and others, concerning the life and character of J. Q. Adams, and, he was, that day, to report in favour of his appointment. His correspondence with government, and with his private friends, was so universally admired, and especially by Pickering and Washington, that the latter not only felt his present obligations, but remembered the past. I will give you one proof, selected from many, in a letter from him to *me*, in these words, the original of which, all in his own hand writing, is now before me.

Monday, Feb. 20th 1797.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for giving me the perusal of the enclosed. The sentiments do honor to the head and heart of the writer;—and if my wishes would be of any avail, they should go to you in a strong hope, that you will not withhold merited promotion from Mr. John Q. Adams, because he is your son.—For without intending to

compliment the father or the mother, or to censure any others, I give it as my decided opinion, that Mr. Adams is the most valuable public character we have abroad;—And, that there remains no doubt in my mind, that he will prove himself to be the ablest of all our diplomatic corps. If he was now to be brought into that line, or into any other public walk, I could not, upon the principle which has regulated my own conduct, disapprove of the caution, which is hinted at in the letter. But he is already entered;—the public, more and more, as he is known, are appreciating his talents and worth;—and his country would sustain a loss, if these were to be checked by over delicacy on your part.

With sincere esteem and affectionate regard,

I am ever yours,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

Vice-President.

Please to recollect who were our ambassadors abroad, at the date of that letter. The presses, in this country, are under party licences. Many pieces in honor of Mr. J. Q. Adams have been refused admittance into all the federal papers, as I have been informed.

Mr. Pickering's conscience, if it was faithful to its trust, must have suggested to him very sufficient reasons for his removal. If his memory is not decayed he may easily now recollect them.

Cæsar's wife must not be suspected, was all the reason he gave for repudiating her. Rea-

sons of state, are not always to be submitted to newspaper discussion. It is sufficient for me to say, that I had reasons enough not only to satisfy me, but to make it my indispensible duty. Reasons which upon the coolest deliberation, I still approve. I was not so ignorant of Mr. Pickering, his family relations, his political, military and local connections, as not to be well aware of the consequences to myself. I said, at the time, to a few confidential friends, that I signed my own dismission when I signed his, and that he would rise again, but I should fall forever. The reason you heard in Philadelphia, was quite sufficient, if there had been no other, but there were many others and much stronger reasons. His removal was one of the most deliberate, virtuous and disinterested actions of my Life. If any future historian should have access to the letter books of the Secretaries of state and compare Mr. Pickering's negotiations with England, with those of his successor, Mr. Marshall, he will see reasons enough for the exchange of ministers. In consequence of Mr. Pickering's removal, I was enabled to negotiate and complete a peace with

France, and an amicable settlement with England. This is reason enough. Mr. Pickering would have made a good collector of the customs; but, he was not so well qualified for a Secretary of state. He was so devoted an Idolater of Hamilton, that he could not judge impartially of the sentiments and opinions of the President of the U. States. Look into Hamilton's Pamphlet. Observe the pretended information of things which could have only passed between me and my cabinet. False and abusive as they were, where could he pretend to have derived them? But, I am not yet to reveal the whole mystery. What I have said is to remain in your own breast. I have no disposition to enter into newspaper controversies with Pickering, or his friends or Editors.

I thank you for your observations on cider, and remain your friend and humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

*Mr. William Cunningham, Jr.
Fitchburg.*

LETTER XIII.

FITCHBURG, *Oct. 22, 1808.**Dear Sir,*

Anxious as I am for the due appreciation by the public of the merits of Mr. John Quincy Adams, the invaluable testimonial of President Washington, contained in your Letter of the 15th instant, could scarcely have been more gratifying to yourself than it is pleasing to me. I perceive, with much satisfaction, that the most essential parts of it may go into circulation without the least hazard to your repose —to *that* extent, I shall not consider myself interdicted in its use by the obligations I owe to the confidence you have reposed in me—I am happy in the thought, that it has been too deliberately reposed to suffer your peace to be disturbed by any fear of my indiscretion.

I am deeply sensible to your kindness in making me acquainted with many of the reasons for the dismission of Mr. Pickering. What you have disclosed shall be inviolably kept. If by the expression “But I am not yet to reveal the whole mystery,” I am to understand your fixed resolution to make, at present, no

farther developement, I beg that I may not be suspected of attempting to change it, nor of even entertaining a curiosity to know its reasons —I will only entreat to be initiated into the whole mystery when you may deem it to be proper. But, if the disclosure is too interesting to be made but on engagements of fidelity made with more than common solemnity, you may, dear Sir, consider such an engagement as conditional to a farther communication.

With affection and respect,

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.



LETTER XIV.

QUINCY, Nov. 7, 1808.

Dear Sir,

The Letter of General Washington would have remained in obscurity forever, as far as I know, as it has done for twelve years past, had not a mean vengeance been hurled on the subject of it, for no other offence than his sterling integrity.

You are the first person, except one, who ever asked me a question concerning the reasons for releasing a certain gentleman from the burthen of public office. That one was Barnabas Bidwell, in the violence of the tempest occasioned by the Presidential Election in 1800. Believing his curiosity to be insidious, I gave him a civil but short answer, that he was a man of too much information not to perceive the impropriety of my complying with his request. Though circumstances are now altered, I shall insist that whatever I write to you upon the subject shall be confidential as long as I live.

What is it you require of me? Nothing less than a volume, which I have neither eyes, nor hands, nor time, nor inclination to write, because it must contain the portraits of all my five ministers: of a Dayton, a Hillhouse, a Goodhue in the senate, of an Otis, a Sitgreaves, a Bayard and a Harper, and several others in the House, with a Hamilton behind the scene; of a M'Donald, a William Moore Smith, agent for British creditors, a John Ward Fenno, and a Porcupine Cobbet, and many others out of doors. I have not mentioned a Liston, nor a

Bond, because whatever their secret influence might be, they were at least discreet. The subterranean intrigues as well as the overt acts must be developed and described.

The gentleman has wreaked his revenge on my Son, in letters, which shew the character of the man, bitter and malignant, ignorant and jesuitical. His revenge has been sweet, and he has rolled it as a delicious morsel under his tongue.

Suppose I should tell you, that the studies of his early youth, and of his riper years, had not been competent to the profound investigations which his office required. We had discussions of great importance with France, England and Spain, especially the two former, involving questions respecting neutral rights, respecting British and Tory claims of anti-revolutionary debts. I could get nothing done as I would have it. My new minister, Marshall, did all, to my entire satisfaction.

Suppose I should say he was very superficially read in the law of nations—Suppose I should say he was very far from any familiar and extensive acquaintance with the laws of England,

and indeed of his own land—Who would believe me? The gentleman himself would believe me, because he is conscious of it, but he would not be likely to confess it in public. Perhaps half a dozen, or a dozen, men in the union, know it, but these would be very unwilling to testify to it. Would it be decent, would it be possible, for a President to publish such reasons, and enter into endless disputes in the newspapers to support them?

His intrigues with senators in opposition to me, and to measures I had adopted, and nominations I had made, led the senate into violations of the constitution, particularly in the nominations of Mr. Murray, Mr. Gerry and Col. Smith. His *encharnement* against Mr. Gerry, whose negotiations were more useful and successful, than those of either of his colleagues, was so furious, that he urged upon me a report containing a phillippic against Gerry as violent and outrageous as it was false and groundless. I blotted it out, but he was so angry at it, that he scarcely treated me with decency. I finally, however, admitted some expressions to pass which I am now very sorry for.

In every step of the progress of the negotiations with France he opposed, obstructed, and embarrassed me to the utmost of his power, and in some instances, with the secret aid of Hamilton, as I suppose, had the art to get all the other four of my ministers to join him.

Before I left Philadelphia, I had called together all the five heads of departments, to consult upon instructions to Mr. Ellsworth, Mr. Davie, and Mr. Murray, in their negotiations with France. We had met several days, and discussed every point in controversy. We had reasoned, and examined, and convinced one another, until we had agreed unanimously upon every article, and reduced the whole to writing.—I gave it to the Secretary of State, to reduce it into form, correct the language where it wanted any alteration, make a fair copy, and send it, as soon as possible, to me, at Quincy, for revision and correction, that I might sign the instructions to be delivered to the Envoys. Arrived at Quincy, I expected them by every post. Week after week passed away and no Instructions arrived. I was uneasy, because our Envoys ought to be upon their passage. After a

long time, instead of Instructions, came a letter to me signed by all five of the heads of departments, advising and most earnestly intreating me to suspend the embarkation of the ministers. This trifling, this negligence of duty, this downright disobedience of my orders, most seriously alarmed me. I was responsible alone to my country for measures, which I knew to be indispensable to avoid a war abroad with France, and a civil war at home, while we were involved and embroiled with England in very difficult controversies, and I could get nothing done. I very coolly, however, preserved my temper, and set off immediately for Trenton to meet my gentlemen, face to face. At Trenton I found the gentlemen had wrought themselves up to a perfect enthusiasm and delusion. They appeared to be fully convinced that the first ships would bring intelligence of the restoration of Louis the eighteenth. Suwarrow at the head of a Russian army on one side, and Prince Charles at the head of an Austrian army on the other, were to conduct Louis 18th to Paris and Versailles in splendor and triumph. I preserved my temper very happily: called my ministers

together, heard all their reasons with the utmost coolness and candour, gave my reasons and opinions in answer to theirs, and decided that the instructions should be finished and the ambassadors embarked as soon as possible, which was done, and they brought back peace abroad and at home. I found Hamilton at Trenton. He came to visit me. I said nothing to him upon politics. He began to give his advice unasked. I heard him with perfect good humour, though, never in my life, did I hear a man talk more like a fool. “The English nation had the most perfect confidence in Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Pitt was determined ‘to restore the house of Bourbon,’ the two imperial courts were also determined to restore the Bourbons, their armies were triumphant, Louis 18th would be in glory at Versailles before my ministers could arrive there. Offence would be taken at my sending a mission to the Directory,” and twenty other wild extravagancies in the same style of dogmatical confidence. I answered every one of his topics with candour and temper, in too long a detail to be repeated here. Time has shewn that I was right and he wrong in every particular.

They had even wrought upon Mr. Ellsworth to believe that the Bourbons would be restored before winter. He and Mr. Davie, at dinner alone with me, conversing upon the subject, Ellsworth let fall an expression to that purpose, when I turned to him and said, "Mr. Ellsworth, do you seriously believe that the Bourbons will be restored so soon?" He answered, "Why: it looks a good deal so." Upon that, I said to them both, "Gentlemen, you may depend upon it, the Bourbons will not be restored these seven years, if they ever are. I request you, seven years hence to recollect what I now say to you," and I supported my opinion by a long argument drawn from the nature and history of all coalitions, from the waste of northern armies by sickness and desertion in France, from that forest of fortifications with which France is every where defended, from the property now possessed by revolutionary men, and especially from the enthusiasm and revolutionary fury that still possessed the people of France. Mr. Ellsworth, however, behaved throughout with perfect propriety and Mr. Davie was of my opinion in all points.

You shall now give me your opinion, whether I was in the wrong in giving Mr. Pickering his conge. He is, for any thing I know, a good Son, Husband, Father, Grandfather, Brother, Uncle and Cousin: but he is a man in a mask, sometimes of silk, sometimes of iron, and sometimes of brass. And he can change them very suddenly and with some dexterity, as I could shew you in many instances, though I have said little or nothing about him, till now, for nine or ten years.

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. William Cunningham.



LETTER XV.

FITCHBURG, Nov. 12, 1808.

Dear Sir,

To my letter of the 22d ult. I have not been favoured with an answer, indeed my expectations of an answer were not confident, for in case of your disinclination to a farther disclosure concerning Mr. Pickering, the most delicate and intelligible intimation of it could be given in silence, and from that, too, I might

infer your assent to another proposition in my letter which you would not favor with your express approbation.

When the speculations, to which I have lately referred, were published, I did not take the Palladium, but since its establishment as the Government paper, I have received it. In that of last Tuesday, I see that the publication of my pieces is resumed, and from the editorial note, which is prefixed, it appears that instead of *six*, as I have informed you, the Editors, in Feb. and March, published *seven* numbers. Of my writings for the press I do not retain copies, and it was only from recollection, which had not much room to err, that I said, it was my *seventh* number which contained the matter treated by the printers as inadmissible. If in the insertion of my numbers, they have been numerally correct, they suppressed, in the *seventh*, my encomiums on Mr. John Q. Adams.—But, with their files before them, to what inference are they liable, if they have not printed a word of that number? I should not hazard a question so pointed at their veracity, and solvable by turning over a few leaves, if I had not

the most entire confidence, that not a single line of it has appeared in print.

I commenced the papers with the design I have communicated to you—I expected it would hold me to the full length of “Discourses on Davila,” incapable of their imitation in any other particular. Frustrated, in part, I am embarrassed with a doubt, whether the prosecution of my plan will answer any valuable purpose. I take the liberty to enclose the Palladium which contains number eight.

Permit me, dear sir, to renew through you, my respects to Mrs. Adams, and your family.

With veneration and esteem,

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

Quincy, Ms.

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LETTER XVI.

FITCHBURG, Nov. 16, 1808.

Dear Sir,

The person who carried to the office the letter which I had the pleasure to write

you the 12th inst. brought me yours of the 9th. You may depend, most assuredly, that your disclosures concerning the *ci-devant* secretary shall not be divulged while you live, and may the day be distant which shall discharge me to my discretion in the use of the important matter you have deposited in my bosom.

The answer which you demand on the question, you have referred to my opinion, I give, without hesitation, in the affirmative. I ask myself, what would have been done in such a case by any other person, conscious of his competency to the duties of his high station, and alive to the responsibility in which it was holden by his country? What, for instance, would have been done by Cicero? What by the Earl of Chatham? But, if for your conduct, there was required the authority of precedent, it was furnished by your predecessor in his treatment of Randolph, and in his answer to the call of the house of representatives for the papers in the case of the British treaty. Of what avail to the nation is the responsibility of the first officer in the republic, if his schemes, constitutionally sanctioned, can be frustrated by his servants?

And where is his regard to his honor, his dignity and the interests of his country, if under the most flagrant instances of their misdemeanour, he will forbear the exercise of his authority over their stations?

With affection and esteem,

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Hon. John Adams.

Quincy, Mass.

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LETTER XVII.

QUINCY, Nov. 25, 1808.

Dear Sir,

I have your favours of the 12th and 16th of the month. The letter of President Washington concerning John Q. Adams is at your discretion, to make what use of it, you please. All the communications concerning the other gentlemen made, or to be made, I confide to your sacred confidence. The great regard I had for your grandfather, and for your grandmother, who was a beloved sister of my mother, and for your father, have induced me, especially

as you was the first, and the only person, who ever *candidly* asked me the question, to commit to you a few hints concerning a subject on which I have been silent for so many years. As, against all the vile slanders, which have been published, I have never said or written a word in my own vindication, I am not about to begin, by a justification of myself for one of the most virtuous actions of my life. If my actions have not been sufficient to support my fame, let it perish. No higher ambition remains with me than to build a tomb upon the summit of the hill before my door, covered with a six foot cube of Quincy Granite, with an inscription like this,

Siste Viator !

With much delight these pleasing hills you view.
Where Adams from an envious world withdrew,
Where sick of glory, faction, power and pride,
Sure judge how empty all, who all had tried,
Beneath his shades the weary chief repos'd,
And life's great scene in quiet virtue clos'd.

To return to the famous gentleman. He is extremely susceptible of violent and inveterate prejudices ; and yet, such are the contradictions to be found in human characters, he is capable of very sudden and violent transitions from one

extreme to an opposite extreme. Under the simple appearance of a bald head and straight hair, and under professions of profound republicanism, he conceals an ardent ambition, envious of every superior, and impatient of obscurity. I always think of a coal-pit, covered over with red earth, glowing within, but unable to conceal its internal heat, for the interstices which let out the smoke, and now and then a flash of flame. He has been several years in Senate, but so totally obscure and insignificant, as to keep him in an agony. Almost always in a minority of two, three, four or five, in thirty-four, rarely saying any thing that has been worth reporting, he broke out at last in a rage, and threw a firebrand into our Massachusetts Legislature against his colleague. The stubble was dry and the flame easily took hold. He has an hereditary right to this distinction ; I mean a strong desire of celebrity, with feeble means of obtaining it. If ever you should see the Salem newspapers, published forty or fifty years ago, you will find them abounding with the writings of the good Deacon, his father, in vindication of the rights and prerogatives of the

first church in Salem. He became so emboldened by the noise he made, that he wrote and published several letters to the king, subscribed with his name. One part of the public was amused, another diverted, and a third fatigued with his ostentatious vanity for some years.— Some thirty-five or thirty-six years ago, I was engaged in a cause at Salem court, in which the deacon was a witness. While he was under examination, though I treated him with the utmost respect and civility, he broke out, without the smallest provocation into a rude personal attack upon me. I was then, as a son of Liberty, obnoxious to the Judges, to the government, to the British ministry, and to the king. Though I was astonished at the deacon's manners, I took no notice of them, till I came to examine his testimony in my argument to the jury. I then said I could not account for his unprovoked animosity to me, an entire stranger to him, unless he meant to recommend himself to somebody to whom I was obnoxious, and I should not be surprised, if in his next letter to the king, he should do me the honour to denounce me to his majesty. This little sally raised a general laugh

at the deacon's expense, and, as I suppose the son was present, he has never forgiven me.—The concatenation of little and great events in this world is often very whimsical and very ridiculous.

Have you never seen the son's speech to the Indians in 1794, or thereabouts ? If you have not I may send you a copy of it. Great light may be thrown upon his character by this document. No man I ever knew had so deep a contempt for Washington. I have had numerous proofs of it from his own lips : yet, he appears to the world a devout adorer of him. No man was a more animated advocate for the French ; yet, now he is as zealous for the English. But enough of this unpleasant subject.

I thank you for the two numbers of Chatham, which discover a good deal of reading and reflection. Have you read Bruce's Travels into Abyssinia in search of the source of the Nile ? You will find in the second volume much learning concerning David's commerce with Ophir and Tarshish in gold and silver, &c.

I am, &c. JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. William Cunningham, Jr.—Fitchburg.

LETTER XVIII.

FITCHBURG, *Dec. 3, 1808.**Dear Sir,*

Your favour of the 25th ult. came duly to hand. What you have already confided to me concerning Mr. Pickering, and what more you may have the goodness to disclose I shall not impart to any one. I repeat this assurance to relieve the solicitude which I perceive you cherish to have me sensibly impressed with the delicacy and importance of the communications with which you have honoured me.

I hope, dear sir, that when the great acts of your life shall be told in marble, your countrymen will recover that just estimation of your worth which shall consecrate in their hearts, through every convulsive scene, the spot of your interment. I have a voucher in the majesty of virtue, and in apposite examples, for asserting that it will be so.

I will get, if I can, the Salem *Gazettes*, containing the anathemas of deacon P. In the old block I may see the nature of the chip.

Of the speech of the “straight-haired” minis-

ter Plenipotentiary to the Indians, I have only some indistinct recollections. I would be much obliged to you for a copy of it—I shall strictly analyze its bearings on the orator's character.—His contempt of Washington, and advocacy of French fanaticism are facts which, unfortunately, are unknown to the public. I wish my suspicions were obviated or confirmed, that his far-famed Report to Congress, on our Foreign Relations, was not his own unassisted performance. It is due to the deservedly laurelled head, that the baldness, concealed under a cardinal's hat, should be exposed.

I thank you for the reference to Bruce's Travels. I have some extracts from his books, but I have not the work itself. I am not unacquainted with, though I do not own, a work of much higher worth; but I know not how to speak of the "Defence of the American Constitutions," without your taking an intimation that you can make me indebted for more than the perusal of it.

When Young and Minns resumed the publication of Chatham, they tendered me their press as a channel of communication to the public of

my essays. Presuming that this offer would hold them, I concluded to write a few more papers, and to incorporate into one of them, some notices of Mr. John Q. Adams. To this I was induced by seeing the declination of Mr. Clinton to serve as Vice-President—And as the Electors, on the popular side, must make a selection of another for that office, I thought it would be neither impolitic, nor too late, to bring Mr. Adams into view, through a federal paper. Accordingly in number thirteen, I have spoken of him at some length. The papers containing numbers ten and eleven I send herewith.

With veneration and esteem,

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

*Hon. John Adams,
Quincy.*

LETTER XIX.

FITCHBURG, Dec. 10, 1808.

Dear Sir,

I had the pleasure to write you the 3d inst. I follow it with this to make the ex-

planation of the concluding part of that letter, which subsequent discoveries have made necessary. I mentioned a particular object as my inducement to a public notice of Mr. John Q. Adams, in the thirteenth number of certain speculations, but it appears, that the occasion I intended to influence has gone by in advance of my efforts. But this was not owing to any delinquency in my endeavours. The paper was received by the printers on the 10th Nov. and if they had not intermitted the publication of the numbers, the number thirteen would have appeared on Friday the 22d of last month.— That it did not appear on that day, I indeed knew at the date of my last; but the omission of a number in the Palladium of that day week, was unknown to me. The letters I prepare for the mail are written on post days, and I very frequently meet with matter in the letters or papers I receive, which affect the contents of the letters I had sent to the office. This was the case when I forwarded my last to you. I found that the regular appearance of my papers had been interrupted, and that the number thirteen could not appear until the 6th instant.—

Whether the editors neglected me on that day on purpose to defeat my views, I leave to conjecture. It is to wear away some of the chagrin their conduct has caused, that I make this elucidation. As it respects Mr. Adams, the omission of the paper will be of little consequence, even though its appearance could have effected all I wished. I designated him for the office Mr Madison will be called to vacate. If what I have sent to the press concerning Mr. Adams should appear, or has appeared, and it should be thought to be composed in more candour than craftiness, I shall feel complimented, rather than wounded, by the opinion. My well meant attempts to serve him have been directed as much by my sense of duty to my country, as by the obligation of private friendship; and I am persuaded that I never shall have occasion to apologise to him for what the union of these governing rules of reflection may suggest respecting him.

I have hopes of being favoured this evening with the talk of Mr. Pickering.

With affection and respect, I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

LETTER XX.

FITCHBURG, *Dec. 17, 1808.**Dear Sir,*

Since I enjoyed the pleasure of addressing you on the 10th inst. I have seen two numbers of the Palladium, and found them both silent respecting Mr. John Q. Adams. Doubtful whether the editors would publish my encomium on him, I retained a copy which is subjoined, and which shall release your patience from any further tax on that subject.

[Here follows a quotation from Chatham No. XIII. written in an abbreviated or short hand, peculiar to the author, which cannot be decyphered by the editor.]

I see it asserted in the Boston papers, that the democratic editors will vote for Mr. Clinton for Vice-President. In the New-York Evening Post, of an early date in November, I saw an article formally announcing that he declined being a candidate for that office. I may have admitted it too hastily from an impression long before imbibed, that he would not serve in that station.

Mrs. Warren, in her History of the Revolution, vol. II, page 207, has given in a note, a

sketch of the character of Count De Vergennes, drawn, I presume, by your pen. Before the appearance of this History, I had publicly coupled the venality of Vergennes and the obsequiousness of his American vassals, to explain the cause of an intermission in your Diplomatic career. I am covetous of the information which will enable me to fortify this explanation with the direct proofs of his being visionary, and of his destitution of moral worth. Mrs. Warren had amassed much information, and where she has confined herself to plain narration she appears very well. In the difficult undertaking of portraying characters she has betrayed her own incapacity, though it must be acknowledged, that she has not been unhappy in her delineations in the instances which did not require a deep investigation. She is the most unfortunate when she assumes the umpirage of political division.

With veneration, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

LETTER XXL

QUINCY, Dec. 13th, 1808.

Dear Sir,

Your favours of the 3d and 10th are received. The 2d and 3d volumes of the Defence are at your service, provided I had any means of conveyance for them. But the first volume is not in my power, having none that I can spare. An edition of the first was printed in Boston, perhaps some copies of it remain there: but I know nothing of it. I laughed when I read your expectation that what you had written on John Quincy Adams, would be printed. I found that you was not acquainted with the world as it exists in Boston. The four federal papers are under the *Imprimatur* of an oligarchy of purse proud speculators, as despotic as the thirty tyrants of Athens. Trials enough have been made, as I have been informed, to insert many things on the same subject, and refused. You will destroy all your credit if you persevere in such attempts. Banks and other vile pranks, have thrown the majority into the hands of those, who were shapen in to-ryism, and, in British idolatry, did their moth-

ers conceive them. Beware then how you offend this irritable race of refugees. Whatever friendship you may have retained for John Quincy Adams, or his Father, I advise you to conceal it close within your own breast. If it takes air it will ruin your prospects.

I have been too much occupied with other things to think of the wise man of Salem :* Time enough. Be patient. Your designation of Mr. John Quincy Adams, to the office Mr. Madison now holds, will be as erroneous, as the other to that of Vice President. Mr. Giles, Mr. Munroe, Mr. Pope, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. twenty others will be more likely. No ! Mr. Adams must be left where he is. He is now at his ease and is happy, and useful, more use-

* *The following note, in the hand writing of Mr. Cunningham, is annexed to the original letter from Mr. Adams.*

One of the things in which Mr. Adams was at this time engaged, was his remarks on Col. Pickering's Letter to Gov. Sullivan, of the 16th Feb. 1807. And, this is the first letter in the correspondence with me, in which Mr. Adams has given reins to the impatient spirit of a controvertist. The gentleman, described in a former letter, as too faulty to succeed in a competition with Gov. Strong, "*unless the people should degenerate.*" is now "*lamented as the last of the whigs !*"

ful perhaps than he could be in any other public station in these times of anarchy, violence and fury. No! The old whigs and their posterity must all go into obscurity, and all the public offices must be monopolised by the blood of the old refugees. Mr. Gore, the son of one refugee must be Governor, Mr. Pickman, a son of another refugee, must be a member of Congress from the old tory county of Salem. Mr. Edward Hutchinson Robbins, a nephew of the sovereign Pontiff of toryism, must be a Counsellor and member of Congress. Mr. Lloyd, the son of another tory, as orthodox as any of the refugees, must be a Senator, &c. &c. &c. The old Whigs, dead or living, will soon be in sufficient obscurity, and the Revolution in sufficient disgrace. The whigs had been reduced to the necessity of choosing Mr. Sullivan. He is now departed and probably will be the last of the whigs. The tories I suppose are sanguine that they shall have Mr. Gore in the spring. There seems to be among them however some suspicions that they are not secure in this hope. I conclude so, because I hear, that among them, other persons are contemplated. Mr. Gray of

Salem has been mentioned, and Mr. Parker, the Judge of the Supreme Court. This gentleman is said to be in high esteem and admiration in the District of Maine, where the election has been sometimes decided. In Worcester, Hampshire and Berkshire, I expect to hear that Mr. Sedgwick will be nominated, unless they should return to my old friend, Governor Strong. The Republicans, no doubt, will adhere to Mr. Lincoln. Both parties however will be directed by their Caucuses, which are established by custom as part of the Constitution, as much as party principles are or party intolerance. *I may mention to you in confidence, that considerable pains has been taken to persuade your friend John Q. Adams to consent to be run by the republicans. But he is utterly averse to it,* and so am I, for many reasons, among which are 1st The office, though a precious stone, is but a carbuncle shining in the dark. 2d It is a state of perfect slavery. The drudgery of it is extremely oppressive. 3d The Compensation is not a living for a common gentleman. 4th He must resign his professorship. 5th He must renounce his practice at the Bar. 6th He

must stand in competition with Mr. Lincoln, which would divide the republican interest and certainly prevent the election of either. 7th IT WOULD PRODUCE AN ETERNAL SEPARATION BETWEEN HIM AND THE FEDERALISTS, at least that part of them who now constitute the absolute Oligarchy. This I own, however, I should not much regret, for this nation has more to fear from them than any other source. 8th Finally, and above all, there is as little prospect of doing any good as acquiring any honour or receiving any comfort. For these reasons, I am decidedly against the project, and so is he. Private station, in my opinion, has no equal for him. Be so good as to tell me who are in nomination in your neighbourhood.

I am as usual,

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. William Cunningham.



LETTER XXII.

FITCHBURG, Dec. 21, 1808.

Dear Sir,

I have received your favour of the 13th inst. and give you my thanks for the offer

of the 2d and 3d volumes of the Defence. If you would be at the trouble of putting them under a blank cover, superscribed with my address, and cause them to be left at Mr. Whee- lock's, at the sign of the Indian Queen in Marl- borough street, they will be brought to me by the driver of the Leominster stage. I shall be unsusceptible of instruction if experience, much longer protracted, shall fail to convince me of an Oligarchic oversight of the federal presses.

Your advice to imprison in my bosom the friendship I feel for yourself and family, is entitled to all the gratitude which is due to a kind and generous intention, but its observance is impracticable. →

I happened to be at the first Court in Worcester which was holden after the acquittal of Mr. Selfridge. There I was told by Mr. Speaker Bigelow, and others, that I was accused of having apostatized from federalism. I informed them, that if the expression of my firm conviction that Selfridge had been guilty of murder, and ought to have been hanged, was the sole ground of the accusation, and if that was enough to constitute a secession from fed-

eralism, I wished to be considered as seceding. But I was not ejected. The great political parties in the State, arranged under their respective standards on the simple question of the guilt or innocence of an individual under a criminal accusation, was a curious spectacle. I am thoroughly persuaded of the power of prejudice. Through the heat of party feuds she sits in regal pomp, in the human breast, dictating most despotically, its decisions. But this heat must subside, and the tranquil scene succeed, when reason shall be reinstated in her government.

With veneration and esteem,
I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.



LETTER XXIII.

QUINCY, Jan. 3, 1809.

Dear Sir,

I have your favours of December 17, and 21st. I hope you will not insinuate a comparison between John Q. Adams and Corio-

Ianus. Whatever injustice or ingratitude may be done him, he has none of the Roman's revenge, much less his treachery.

Of Mrs. Warren's History I have nothing to say. The Count De Vergennes was an accomplished gentleman and scholar, and a statesman of great experience in various diplomatic and other ministerial stations. In treating with other nations, he considered the interest of his own country and left others to take care of theirs. His refinements were not invisible. His negotiations were very like those of the British Cabinet with us at this day. All I have to say is, that all European Cabinets and Ministers are very much alike: and our only security against them is in our own fortitude and the sense and integrity of our own Ministers. Have you seen any wondrous skill in our foreign Ambassadors for some years past?

I have sent to the Indian Queen the 2d and 3d vols. of a work which the English editor of the 2d edition calls an History of Republicks. It may be called *The American Boudoir*. What is a Boudoir? It is a *Pouting room*. And what is a Pouting room? In many gentlemen's

houses in France, there is an apartment, of an octagonal form, twelve or fifteen feet across, or thirty six or forty-five feet round, and all the eight sides, as well as the ceiling over head, are all of the most polished glass Mirrors: so that, when a man stands in the centre of the room he sees himself in every direction, multiplied into a row of selfs, as far as the eye can reach.

The humour of it is, that when the lady of the house is out of temper, when she is angry, or when she weeps without a cause, she may be locked up in this chamber to pout, and to see in every direction how beautiful she is. There are settees and chairs round the sides and commonly a bath in the centre, which may be made hot or cold. So that persons may see themselves naked in every posture. Such a Boudoir is the Defence. Our States may see themselves in it, in every possible light, attitude and movement. They may see all their beauties and all their deformities. Happy they who are made cautious by others' dangers!

I return the editor's letter, which, with a thousand other things, concurs to show that cer-

tain presses are under the controul of an aristocracy of bankers led by the nose by an oligarchy of Shylocks, all sycophants to Britain. A happy new year.

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. Wm. Cunningham,

LETTER XXIV.

FITCHBURG, Jan. 14, 1809.

Dear Sir,

I received, on the last day of December, the 2d and 3d volumes of the Defence, for which I renew my thanks. You have truly characterized this work in the comparison you have made of it, in your letter of the 3d inst. to a Boudoir. Many of the evils which you have described as incident to an unbalanced government, we have found by experience to have been insufficiently guarded against by our Constitution. A paragraph in the 3d vol. page 460, beginning with—"It is the true policy," and ending with "constitution," I have placed with my materials for elucidating an occurrence in the life of an Ex-Secretary, which

he and his friends would keep shrouded, or have explained to your disadvantage.

The comparison of Mr. John Q. Adams to Coriolanus, was, as you doubtless supposed, an inadvertence. I had in my mind the story of Camillus, but erred in its application. In a fugitive essay, allusions are seldom attempted in the accuracy of Plutarch's parallels. If they hold in one or two striking particulars, they answer. An important point, in the resemblance to the Roman, is, and, I think not unaptly, anticipated.—Mr. Adams may interpose and save his country, and not lose a likeness of Camillus should he do it in the Toga, not the Helmet. My memory is oftentimes the only registry to which I can appeal: a habit of confiding to its records betrays me into mistakes.

Our foreign Ministers have not, I think, of late been prodigies. Mr. Bowdoin (to whom, by the way, I understand that the Republicans have offered the Chair) made no figure. His mind and his constitution were too far vitiated in the old school of Europe, where he was sent to finish his education, to permit him ever to appear rich in the inheritance of his Father's

worth and wisdom. Mr. Pinckney, in the game of cat-in-pan, is making himself contemptible. Lethe would be better for Armstrong than the water of Bourbon D'Archambault.

My Chathams are nearly all published. If they attract your curiosity, you can gratify it long before the papers can reach you so circuitously as through me. In No. XV. the editors omitted a paragraph, for which they have asked pardon, in the body of the piece. The part omitted was to this purport:—

“ But that Great Britain should do more than maintain herself against her adversary, I have the same objections as to her being expunged from the catalogue of nations. Her security may require a new modification of the European economy, but it asks nothing personally relating to the Bourbons or the Buonapartes. That a bone of contention might be mouldered into dust, I wish, indeed, that the hopes of the Bourbons, as they relate to France, were extinct. I can see nothing in policy, in principle, or in justice, to require, but every thing in humanity, to deplore their being reinstated on the Gallic Throne. And, I will not dissemble, that

I have no such elevated conceptions of British magnanimity as to overcome the jealousy of the most overbearing atrocities towards us, could she reign mistress of her neighbours. We have had too much experience on this head to be unconvinced, that the reassumption of her former power and splendour, would occasionally subject us to an inconvenient employment of force to moderate her domineering temper."

The Liberty of the Press!

According to the last advices, it appears that Buonaparte will make as short work with Castenos as Cæsar did with Pharnaces, and may describe his victory in the same terms.

It was with much regret that I saw in the papers of this week, some account of a *letter from you to a Member of Congress*. A Chronicle of last week gave a summary account of its contents. From the tenor of the letters with which you have honoured me, I conclude, that your correspondent has rendered himself undeserving of your confidence. I am informed that the letter is much a topic at Boston, and has given rise to free animadversion. It is an arduous duty of friendship to give you this in-

formation, but it will not, for that, be the less acceptable.

The gratulations of the season I most sincerely reciprocate to yourself, and tender to your Family.

With veneration and affection,

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.



LETTER XXV.

FITCHBURG, Jan. 11, 1809.

Dear Sir,

The last letter, which I had the honour to receive from you, dated January 3d. I have before acknowledged. Permit me to remind you, that I have in expectation something farther from you, concerning the misnamed Aristides.

I am perfectly ashamed to speak to you again of my Chathams, but it is unavoidable. The three concluding numbers, the printers refuse to publish. In two of them I had embodied the reasons which had occurred to me in favour of

substituting for the Embargo, a license to merchant ships, to arm against aggressors indiscriminately, and I gave many reasons against giving to our resentments a partial direction.

The determination of the Essex Junto to drive this country into a war with France, and of another party to effect hostilities exclusively with England, are, in my opinion, alike inauspicious to our peace and prosperity. With this impression, I reject the Report of Mr. Gore to the House of Representatives. Considering the temper of the times, an arming against violators of our rights, without distinction, is, it appears to me, the only defence of them, we can engage in, whole bodied; in any other, we shall be lacerated with our own stripes. And does not justice combine with policy in favour of indiscriminate resistance?

The papers announce that Mr. John Q. Adams is at Washington. I shall be disappointed if his rare talents and incorruptible integrity are permitted a long respite from public occupation.

With veneration and affection,

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

LETTER XXVI.

QUINCY, Feb. 11, 1809.

Dear Sir,

I have your favour of the 14th, ult. The Mirror was never read—and if it ever should be it will be wilfully misunderstood. Seventeen wheels within one wheel, seventeen empires within one empire, seventeen sovereignties within one sovereignty, seventeen *imperia* in one *imperio*, will tell in time. We have had a Shays' disturbance, a Gallatin's disturbance, a Tories' disturbance, and why may we not have a Pickering's disturbance? Such, I think, is the spirit of the reasoning of the present times.

Whether the Republicans have offered the Chair to Mr. Bowdoin, or not, I know not. They talk of this, that, and the other Gentleman, but all will depend upon the Caucus in the Legislature, and that, I presume, will determine on Mr. Lincoln. The Federalists too talk of many candidates, as Gov. Strong, Judge Parker, and many others, but their Caucus is pledged to Mr. Gore and they cannot abandon him. The question will be between Lincoln and Gore.

Your rejected paragraph concerning Great Britain was high treason against the present domineering party. But it is sound sense and true policy. It is not wonderful that *some* persons among us are so eager to rush into the arms of Great Britain. But it is unaccountable, that there should be so many. Common understanding one would think sufficient, when enlightened with an ordinary knowledge of mankind and the general history of England and America, to convince any man that Great Britain is the natural enemy of the United States. She has looked at us from our first settlement to this moment, with eyes of jealousy, envy, hatred and contempt. At this time she knows not how to do without us. She makes a great profit of us. Yet she sees that we make a profit too, and that we grow faster than she does. Our population, wealth, power, and importance, with all nations, increases incomparably more rapid than hers. This prospect she cannot bear. She sees too, that this is the only rising country of the world, and that the American people are the most active portion of the human race, especially the New-England States,

For us then to quarrel with all other nations for the sake of courting the protection of Great Britain, is as if the lamb should fly from its friendly flock and faithful shepherd, and seek the friendship and protection of the wolf. All the nations of Europe, to my knowledge, are friendly to us. If the French are now an exception it is owing to the war with England, and the singular character of their present Ruler.

Buonaparte I think, at least I hope, will not find so easy a conquest of the Spaniards. The English will make sure of the Spanish Navy, and secure their own retreat on board their ships. I hope however they will come in contact with the French. If they should, though they may be overpowered by numbers, they will give the French something to remember. Bona will not have to say *veni, vidi, vici*. Britons are at least as brave and more patient than the French.

Regret nothing that you see in the papers concerning me. It is impossible that newspapers can say the truth. They would be out of their element.—I regard them no more than the gossamer that idles in the wanton summer air.

When you told me that my letter had been a topic in Boston, and given rise to free animadversion, you should have told me what those animadversions were. We should never tell a man that he has been slandered without informing him what those slanders were.

I have a few sheets of paper written on a point on which I differed formerly and latterly with our angry Senator, and which was one of the causes of his removal, which I will send you provided you will previously give me your honour that you will return it after you have read it without taking any copy.

I am, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. Cunningham.



LETTER XXVII.

QUINCY, Feb. 14, 1809.

Dear Sir,

The complaint in your favour of the 11th, of the refusal to publish your Chathams is no surprise to me. I have seen nothing in the four Federal papers of Boston for the last year,

but such another prostitution of genius, learning, and eloquence as we read in Madam Draper's, Fleet's, and Mein and Fleming's, Papers in 1773 and 1774. A blind devotion to England and a disposition to sacrifice to her, our rights and a headlong inclination to go to war with France, and for the sake of these *blessings* to hazard if not sacrifice the Union and Constitution of the United States. Not one of those papers will publish a word inconsistent with that system.

I agree with you in the system of armed neutrality at first. It will take time to try that experiment, and time gained is precious.

I have a letter to-day from John Q. Adams at Washington on the sixth of the month. He arrived in time for the session of the Supreme Court, before which he has a good deal of better business than debating in Congress. If his talents and integrity continue to be neglected, as they have been insulted, it is not his fault, and I have the consolation to know that it is more for his interest and the peace of his mind, than any public office would be. If he were in the Senate of Massachusetts he could only labour in vain with his friend Mr. Gray to prevent

our Legislature from overleaping the boundaries of our Constitution.

When John Wilkes was writing one of his *North Britons*, he said to one of his friends, who came in suddenly upon him, “I have been studying these four hours to see how near I could come in my next *North Briton* to treason, without committing it.” The deliberations and debates of our two Houses, appear to me to be somewhat like a hard study to come as near violating the Constitution as possible without breaking it.

Our respectable Metropolis is too warm and it has communicated too much of its heat to some other places which are too much under its influence.

I inclose you a *Frederick Town Herald* of January 14th, in which you may read a philippick of Mr. John Hanson Thomas upon the City of Baltimore. What would be said, if such an oration were made in the *Chronicle*, or in our House of Representatives concerning our modest City of Boston.

I am Sir, as usual,

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. Cunningham.

LETTER XXVIII.

FITCHBURG, *Feb. 20, 1809.**Dear Sir,*

Your favours of the 11th and 14th inst. came both to hand to-day. I have only time, by this mail, to make the acknowledgment, and to request of you the goodness to send me what you have written on a point controverted between yourself and the person whose pertinacity you have found so unmanageable.

The engagements, on my part, which you have proposed as conditional to its reception, I most freely and unreservedly make.

With esteem and veneration,

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.



LETTER XXIX.

FITCHBURG, *Feb. 23, 1809.**Dear Sir,*

I wrote you under the date of the 20th inst. and sent it to the Post office, but ar-

riving there a few minutes too late to be forwarded by the mail, it was returned. I now forward it under cover with this. There is a sentence in your favour of the 11th, demanding my particular attention. “*When you told me*” you observe “*that my letter had been a topick at Boston, and given rise to free animadversion, you should have told me what those animadversions were.*” I instantly thought of the story of Le Fever—“*When thou offeredst him whatever was in my house, thou shouldst have offered him my house too.*” But in the animadversions referred to, there is a counterpart, not a likeness to the conduct of “my uncle Toby.”—In the censure of you, sir, there is the reverse of sentiment. An entire conviction of this and the certainty of your own consciousness of it, ought perhaps to have restrained me from making the communication I did; yet if the littleness which is striving at aggrandizement through the representation that any of your opinions are dictated by private pique towards Pickering and his party, is regarded by you, as it deserves to be, undeserving of notice as the prattling of a magpie, it will, I trust, afford you some conso-

lation to know, that you have friends, who, founding their estimation of your character upon an intimate acquaintance with it, view with derision, or with indignation, the bows exercised by malicious hands in hurling arrows which fall pointless by your side. If in this explanation, and to any extent, I have administered this consolation, I shall the less lament the unguardedness which, in leaving undefined a calumny, might to some have given occasion for disquieting apprehensions.

I thank you for the Frederick Town Herald. For the sake of Mr. Kettering's antidote to canine madness, which that paper contains, I ask your leave to keep it.

Our peace and security may be as much jeopardized in the intemperate warmth of Boston as in the frantic licentiousness of Baltimore. To both, the adage is applicable. *Ne sutor ultra crepidam.*

With affection and respect,

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Hon. John Adams.

LETTER XXX.

QUINCY, *Feb. 22, 1809.**Dear Sir,*

Inclosed you will find a philippic of our angry, peevish, fretful Prophet Jonah. His anger is his talent. When he gives a loose to that passion, as he always does in every thing, he produces something smart, pert and malignant which pleases the malignity of the vulgar. But philippics are not the highest style of politics. I cannot think Demosthenes and Cicero in the highest grade of Statesmen, though they certainly were of Orators.

You will see how ardently he was attached to the French, even to the highest strain of Jacobinism, and king killing. Compare this with his present ardent attachment to the English, and see how the same temper can swing the extremest vibrations of the pendulum.

From Jonah let me turn to Harlequin. Have you read Matthew Lyon's letter to his friend in Vermont? The mixture of monk and monkey in this fellow creature of ours, always diverts me, like a medicine for the spleen, or a cordial for low spirits. I shall not examine his system.

As far as it is intelligible he is for repealing all Embargoes, Non-Intercourses, and Non-Importations, and surrendering all pretensions to rights. I suspect he is one of the little merchants he mentions, not one of the big, by any means, and, that his little *paquotilles* are somewhat deranged and in danger. The sum of what he says in one place, is, that the vulgar among the Federalists adored John Adams and the vulgar among the Republicans adore Tom Jefferson. "When John Adams said that the finger of heaven pointed to war, you and I laughed at him." This may be true : but it was the grinning of idiots at each other—the laughter of fools, the crackling of thorns under a pot. He is so great a worshipper and idolator of Tom Paine, that he and his correspondent might believe that there is no Heaven, or that Heaven has no finger. If he believed in a God and a Providence, and had eyes in his head or brains in his skull, he might have seen and would have seriously considered that the course of events had rendered a war, or indelible disgrace and national degradation, unavoidable. He must have seen that Providence did indicate war, and

ordain war; for, a war we had in fact, a war declared in form by the House of Representatives, the Senate and President of the United States. It was not a universal war: it was defined and limited to certain cases: but a declaration of a Sovereign that a solemn and vastly important treaty between him and another sovereign is null and void, by the infractions, violence, injustice and breach of faith by that other, is tantamount to a declaration of war. But Congress went farther; they raised forces by land and sea, and authorized hostilities, and a war was actually waged. A glorious and triumphant war it was. Instead of hearing of vessels taken in our rivers and burnt in our harbours, as we had done for a long time, not an hostile sail dared to spread itself on any part of our vast sea-coast. Instead of our merchant ships being taken by scores, and our property captivated by millions in the West-Indies, Talbot, Truxton, Decatur and Little cleared the whole seas, and not a privateer or picaroon or even frigate dared shew its head. The Proud Pavillion of France was, in many glaring instances, humiliated under the eagles and stripes of the United States. But

the greatest triumph of all, was, that the haughty Directory, who had demanded tribute, refused to receive our Ambassadors, and formally and publicly, by an act of Government, declared that they would not receive any more Ministers from the United States, till I had made excuses and apologies for some of my speeches, were obliged to humble themselves, retract all their declarations and transmit to me the most positive assurances in several various ways both official and inofficial that they would receive my Ministers, and make peace on my own terms.

Let the jackasses, Lyon and his correspondent, and his intimate friends, Duane, Callender and Tom Paine, bray or laugh at all this, as they did at the finger of God. If ever an Historian should arise fit for the investigation, this transaction must be transmitted to posterity as the most glorious period in American History, and as the most disinterested, prudent, and successful conduct in my whole life. For I was obliged to give peace and unexampled prosperity to my country for eight years, and, if it is not for a longer duration, it is not

my fault, against the advice, intreaties, and intrigues of all my Ministers, and all the leading Federalists in both houses of Congress.

The two factions have conspired hitherto to smother all my glory: yet, they cannot avoid letting out, now and then, a glimpse, and this letter of Lyon's is one instance of it.

Our parties at present resemble two ladies of easy virtue, in whose quarrels and scoldings, one reproaches the other with her weakness with a lover the last night, and the other retorts, you are worse than I, for, you committed adultery the night before and put horns upon your husband. Unfortunately there is too much truth in both. Neither party, however, in the violence of their rage can avoid throwing out something now and then in honour of

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. Cunningham.

P. S. The Caitiff says I repented. This is false. I had nothing to repent of. I departed from no principle, system, or profession. The French Government repented and reformed. Their humiliation and my triumph were complete. Both struck the British Ambassador so

forcibly that he said to me “To what degrees of abasement will not the French submit to you ? I was in hopes they would have persevered and gone to war with you.”

My system was from the beginning, to make peace with them the moment I could do it consistently with the honour and interest of the nation. But this disappointed the Anglomanic Federalists as well as Mr. Liston, and they have hated me for it ever since. J. A.



LETTER XXXI.

FITCHBURG, *March 11, 1809.*

Dear Sir,

On the first of the month, I received your favour of the 22d ult. with a copy of a speech of a *ci-devant* Minister to the six Nations. Having been ill with the prevailing influenza, and expecting, mail after mail, to receive your answer to my letters of the 20th and 23d of February, I have delayed this acknowledgement. I hope that this evening will relieve my impatience to see the speculations you have written in opposition to the opinions

of an officer whose duty it was to facilitate, but whose contumacy embarrassed your Administration.

I had seen Lyon's Letter, and had waded through it. When I turn to the journals of '98, and compare the treatment of him then with the estimation of him now, I think of a belle who, in the pride of accomplishments, casts her eye fastidiously upon a worthless fellow, but who, when past her prime, 'oversteps the modesty of nature' in her forwardness to encourage his advances.—'Tis a mortifying meanness! Lyon has been called a beast, but the most I could ever make of him was a chattering pianet. *Noscitur ex sociis.*

Your view of our situation in 1798 is fully substantiated by public documents. So glorious a result of the measures then pursued ought to have settled them forever in the Cabinet, and in the bosom of every American, as the *only* measures, designated by Heaven and consecrated by experience, for the maintenance of our maritime rights. The fortunate issue, sir, of these measures to your own fame, is a subject, with which I am too full not to fear to

speak to *you* and confine myself within allowable limits. The reduction of Directorial *hauteur* to a compliance with your own conditions, was a conquest which no other cabinet can boast. Your declaration in your Message to Congress of June 21, '98, that you "would not send another Minister to France, without assurances that he would be received, respected and honoured as the representative of a great, free, powerful, and independent nation," committed you, as to the terms upon which a new mission would be instituted. I derive the highest satisfaction from the direct information, that the Directory transmitted to you "the most positive assurances in various ways, both official and inofficial, that they would receive your Ministers, and make peace on your own terms." You know it, sir, to have been alleged, that of a relaxation in the tone of the Directory, you had nothing but informal intimations, circuitously passed to you through Mr. Murray, and of too vague a character to release you from your engagement in your Message. To what distortions will not a phrenzied party descend! The concessions on the part of the executive of France, which abat-

ed, if but for a moment, the Hotsperian temper of the British minister, were unquestionably such as ought effectually to have appeased the just indignation of the American President. The confessions of Mr. Liston, that the submission of the Directory had banished his hopes of a war, is the more *precious* for being unwillingly yielded. If his understanding and his magnanimity, enlightened and ennobled, burst through his prejudices to pay you a just compliment, the breach was instantly repaired, and in his own breast and in the breasts of his party, these prejudices have pent up, against you, not wisdom and generosity only, but truth—They will have their enlargement—The day will come when the Statue, and the hearts of a grateful people, will bear the honourable and useful memorial of their triumph. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit.*

I wish I could be favoured with your thoughts upon the State Papers which have lately appeared. With veneration and esteem,

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams,

Quincy, Mass.

LETTER XXXII.

*QUINCY, March 4, 1809.**Dear Sir,*

I have yours of February 20th and 23d. The enclosed five sheets are the rough draft, which I have requested and you have promised to return. I shall burn it, because I have made another copy more correct, in which I have left out the name, and much of the Trumpery.

Return the enclosed as soon as you can to

Your humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. Wm. Cunningham.

LETTER XXXIII.

*FITCHBURG, March 14, 1809.**Dear Sir,*

My solicitude to see your strictures upon Mr. Pickering's letter was satisfied by the last mail. I acquit myself, by the enclosure of the sheets, of one of the stipulations upon which you transmitted them to me—the other has not been violated.

It is evident that the plan of your administration and the *medium* of your foreign intercourse, were not formed to be associated.

With veneration and esteem,

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

LETTER XXXIV.

QUINCY, *March 20, 1809.*

Dear Sir,

I have received your favours of March 11th and 14th. In answer to the first, I wish to know whether you remember Gen. Washington's answer to Adet, the successor of Genet. It was written by the Gentleman in question, and, by the spirit of it, represented the President almost as ardent a Jacobin as himself. He had not yet been converted from his Gallicism and Jacobinism. You remember the thing, "Born and educated in a free Country," &c. "wonderful people," &c.

You wish to be informed of my thoughts upon the State papers, which have lately appeared. What State papers do you mean? The Diplo-

matic correspondence between our Administration and the Cabinets of France and England? or the votes of our towns of Boston, Newburyport, Augusta, &c. &c. &c.? or the Resolutions, Addresses, &c. of our Massachusetts House and Senate? or the volumes of speeches in Congress? If you want my comments upon all this farrago, you cut out more work for me than I have days to live.

You speak of the fortunate issue of my negotiation with France to my Fame!!! I cannot express my astonishment. No thanks for that action, the most disinterested, the most determined and the most successful of my whole life. No acknowledgment of it ever appeared among the Republicans, and the Federalists have pursued me with the most unrelenting hatred and my Children too, from that time to this. Covered however with the thickest veils of their hypocrisy because there was some danger in being too open. My Fame!!! It has been the systematical policy of both parties, from that period especially, and indeed for twelve years before to conceal from the people all the services of my life. And they have succeeded to a

degree, that I should scarcely have believed it possible for a union of both parties to effect.

I know too well that it was alleged, and Pickering's correspondents, Higginson and Cabot, alleged in their cowardly anonymous way, *and they even corrupted Ben. Russell*, against his own judgment, to print their calumnies in the *Centinel*, "that I had nothing but informal intimations." But the fact is, that I had the most direct, formal and official information and assurances, in two different ways and through two different diplomatic organs. The first was a resolve of the Directory signified by their Secretary, Talleyrand, and conveyed to Mr. Pichon, Secretary of Legation and *charge des affaires* of France, in the absence of their Ambassador at the Hague, by Mr. Pichon to Mr. Murray, the American Minister at the Hague, and by him officially to me. This was a legal communication according to the most scrupulous usage and practice of the Courts of the world; the most delicate in all matters of etiquette. In what other manner could the Cabinet of France have communicated with me. They had no Minister in America. They were

at war with England and had no minister there. They could not therefore convey any thing to me through Mr. King. Through Spain, Portugal or Prussia, would have been more round about, have taken more time, and been infinitely less certain of a safe conveyance. The Directory then took the best possible course in their power. And the assurance was as complete as words could express. The second assurance was more positive, more explicit and decisive still, and through the most authentic channel that existed. It was Mr. Gerry, one of my own Ambassadors, and by way of excellency my own Ambassador, for I had appointed him against the advice of all my ministers to the furious provocation of Pickering and against the advice of all the Senators whom he could influence. Mr. Gerry, in an official public letter, conveyed to me, at the request of the Directory and their Secretary, Talleyrand, the most positive and express assurances, that I had demanded. This letter of Mr. Gerry threw Pickering into so furious a rage against Gerry, that in a report to me which I requested him to draw for me to communicate to Congress, he

inserted a most virulent, false, and calumnious philippic against Gerry. I read it with amazement. I scarcely thought that prejudice and party rage could go so far; I told him it would not do: it was very injurious and totally unfounded. I took my pen and obliterated the whole passage as I thought, but after all, I inadvertently let some expressions pass, which ought to have been erased. Pickering reddened with rage, or grief, as if he had been bereaved of a darling child. He even went so far as to beg that I would spare it, and let it go to Congress. But I was inexorable; and, his hatred of me has been unrelenting from that time to this.

But these were not all the official assurances I received. I had personal conversations with Mr. Gerry and in detail. He declared to me, that he had the most decisive assurances both from the Directory and Talleyrand, that they would not only receive my minister upon my own terms, but make peace with me on my own terms. And I am convinced, had that Constitution continued and the negotiation been conducted with the Directory, I should have had

my own terms. But Napoleon came in and altered the case a little. The convention, however, as finally ratified, is a monument of the dignity my country once had and of the respect paid to its policy and power. Unofficial assurances I had moreover. I will mention two instances. Mr. Logan of Philadelphia, however scorned and run down by the English party, is a Gentleman of fortune, education, good breeding and not despicable abilities. After his return from France, he made me a visit, and politely informed me, that he waited on me at the request of Talleyrand, to assure me in the most solemn manner, that the Directory wished for peace with the United States and desired me to send a minister, or authorize one already in Europe to treat, and that I might depend upon his cordial and honourable reception; and, that a treaty should be made to my satisfaction. I should however have paid no attention to this, if I had not received other similar assurances through Mr. Murray and Mr. Gerry.

Another instance was through General Washington. Mr. Joel Barlow wrote a long, elaborate, elegant and ingenious letter to General

Washington, in which he urged negociation and peace with a variety of arguments, and insisted upon it, that every thing might easily be arranged to mutual satisfaction. Washington was so impressed by it, that he sent it to me, with a letter of his own, in which he said to me, that he had reason to believe that Barlow's Letter was written with the knowledge and consent of the French Government. And Washington added, that "it appeared to him that the people of America were very desirous of peace." What could I understand by this hint, but an expression of his opinion, that I ought to endeavour to make peace if I could? However, Barlow's letter would have had no more weight with me than Logan's message, nor would Washington's opinion have been regarded more than either, if they had not been preceded or followed by the regular communications through Murray and Gerry. With this diplomatic evidence, every Court in Europe and the French Nation themselves, as well as our American people, would have cried shame upon the French Government and justified a subsequent war.

This conduct should not have brought upon me disgrace. But the British faction was determined to have a war with France, and Alexander Hamilton at the head of the army and then President of the United States. Peace with France was therefore treason against their fundamental maxims and reasons of state.

But if I had been too hasty in declaring, that I would not send a minister, but upon certain conditions, or too easy in receiving the conditions, why should the Federalists endeavour to render me unpopular for this? It could answer no end but to turn me out, and they ought to have known, that they could carry no other man in the Union; or, to force me to retract my nomination of ambassadors, or suspend their voyage and supercede the negociation altogether.

These were their motives and they exhausted all their wit in studies and labours to defeat the whole design. A war with France, an alliance with England, and Alexander Hamilton the father of their speculating systems at the head of our Army and the State, were their hobby-horse, their vision of sovereign felicity.

No wonder they hate the author of their defeat.

The papers you promised to return, I have received in yours of the 14th in better order than they went from

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. William Cunningham, Jr.

LETTER XXXV.

FITCHBURG, *March 31, 1809.*

Dear Sir,

I know not when my sensibilities have been more exquisitely touched, than they were, by the perusal of your favour of the 20th inst. and by the concluding sentence of your letter to Messrs. Wright and Lyman, which I read at the same time. Thoroughly sensible as I am of the wrong which has been done you, I am yet persuaded, that the natural effect of your own reflections upon it, is to its aggravation, and to a misconception of its object. I mean with the Federal party at large. The vehement opposition of the leading Federalists to a third mission to France, and the coldness

with which they required your regard to your high responsibility, were the most unadvised steps; their effect was to oust you, and overthrow the Federal cause together—Party spirit is uncounsellable, and mischance is generally the consequence of its rashness. So nearly equipoised as were the parties, equanimity was the virtue, on which the Federalists could alone rely to preserve their preponderance. That you was the only candidate in the nation which, with all the prudence they could exercise, they could carry into the Presidency, was a fact well understood by them, and their conduct towards you quadrated at last with that impression. At the election of 1800, their endeavours in your favour were unabated by their disapprobation of the third diplomatic attempt to adjust our differences with France. From the advice, *very particularly urged*, by Hamilton upon the electors, to give an *equal* vote to Gen. Pinckney, it may be suspected, that in case of the success of the Federal ticket, and of a choice eventually by the House of Representatives, he intended to throw his influence into that body in favour of the Carolinian. But the great body of the

people would have spurned this Machiavelian stratagem. It was *you*, and *you* only, whom *they* designated for the first office in their gift. Excepting the devices, of a transient duration, which were employed to hoodwink the public respecting the reasons you had, again to resort to negociation with France, I cannot think that, even with the rankest Essex-Junto-men, there has ever been a disposition to your detraction; an estimation of your worth and talents bordering on devotion, has been a common sentiment. Should you object to my opinion the splenetic ebullitions of the “Libeller” Hamilton, I should not be disposed to retract it. I have no disposition to depreciate the talents of Hamilton—had they been greater, the invectives in his “Letter” could not have been sharpened by them.

→ Your enumeration of the various ways in which the solicitude of the Directory to avert the displeasure of an insulted people, was communicated to you, gives me great pleasure and satisfaction. They are ample authority for the felicitations I expressed to you on the fortunate termination to your fame of our disputes with

France. It affects me, my dear sir, that you understood me as referring to “present popularity, that echo of folly and shadow of renown.” I meant not the fame resembling a vegetable forced in a hot house, expanding luxuriantly but with a sickly hue, and which expires the instant it is exposed—But, I intended, the fame represented by the Mountain Oak, deepening its roots the more it has to encounter, and though often stripped and shattered by the fury of the elements, imbibes from them a vigour which makes its spreading branches and its trunk invincible to their power. And in my reference to this fame, I accorded with the opinion you expressed in the letter to which I replied—You said (speaking of the year '98) “If ever an historian should arise fit for the investigation, this transaction must be transmitted to posterity as the most glorious period in American history.” In the dialogue with Count Diodati, you could not have avoided the consolation of the reflection, that, if in the strange contrariety of human conduct, you should, like Aristides, be banished by the Ostracism, confined like Miltiades, forced, like Phœcian, to the poisonous draught, or be

slain like Scipio, truth would soon triumph over delusion, and perpetuate in sculpture its irreversible decisions. Among the comforts of this world, I hope, dear sir, that you will yet find mingled the extatic ore of knowing, that you live contemporaneously with your own glory, and may you leave the world—*Vita cedat uti conviva satur.*

I perfectly recollect the Address to Adet, but that it was penned by Pickering, I did not before know.

The State papers upon which I wished to have your thoughts, were those issued by our Legislature; the word “Farrago” is intelligible of your opinion of *all* that have recently appeared.

I inclose the Lieut. Governor’s Paper, that you may see what use, in the electioneering way, is made of your Letter to Wright and Lyman. Was it your expectation that they would have made it public?

With affection and respect.

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Hon. John Adams.

LETTER XXXVI.

QUINCY, *April 24, 1809.**Dear Sir,*

I received your favour of the 31st March in due time: but I am become, all at once and very unexpectedly, a man of business, and of so much importance in the world, that I have not found time to acknowledge it, till now.

You say your sensibilities were exquisitely touched by my last letter to you and my letter to Wright and Lyman which you received at the same time. The word sensibilities has a very extensive signification. There are sensibilities of pity, compassion, and sympathy; sensibilities of fear, terror and horror; sensibilities of resentment and revenge; sensibilities of anger, wrath and fury; sensibilities of contempt, disdain and scorn; sensibilities of ridicule and humour; and lastly sensibilities of love and tender affections. I will not descend to sensibilities of a lower and more brutal kind.

But you have not told me what species of sensibilities were so forcibly excited in your bosom by those poor letters of mine.

Your sentiments, concerning the Federalists

in general, and their regard to me at the time when I made peace with France, are, I believe, very just. But, the leaders are all ; the followers nothing : and the leaders are, and have long been, my enemies. The great body are silent and inactive, and not a man of them has ever stepped forth to vindicate me, or express the slightest indignation at the eternal revilings, which appear in their Newspapers.

A new paper has been set up in Boston called the Boston Patriot, edited by Everett and Mumroe. Merely because the paper was a novelty, and the editors total strangers to me, I have chosen it to convey some thoughts to the public. I will either throw off that intolerable load of obloquy and insolence they have thrown upon me, or I will perish in the struggle.

In vain will you soothe me with the hopes of justice from posterity—from any future historian. Too many falsehoods are already transmitted to posterity that are irrevocable. Records themselves are often liars. No human being but myself, can do me justice ; and, I shall not be believed. All I can say will be imputed to

vanity and self love. Be it so. Job, Paul and Tully, shall be my exemplars.

You ask if I expected that Wright and Lyman would publish my letter. I did not believe it probable that they would: but, I did not care if they did. I thought it possible they might publish the paragraph relative to Gore's Declaration of war against France.

The Dialogue with Deodati is literal truth, and I could give you a multitude of reasons I had in my mind, besides the general, the universal conduct and destiny of democratic Republics,* for the expectations I then expressed to that wise and learned Ambassador from the Elector of Saxony. The Dialogue from first

* Note in the handwriting of Mr. Adams' correspondent. "It will be recollect, that the spirit of this dialogue was to shew that Mr. Adams, though then enjoying the confidence of his country, would become, at last, an object of its persecution. The expectation of this on the part of Mr. A. was founded on the general, the universal conduct and destiny of democratical Republics." What is this 'conduct and destiny?' It is ingratitude to public benefactors—anarchy—despotism. In the preceding letter from Mr. Adams, he says, that certain 'conduct of his, should not have brought upon him disgrace'—&c. Does this language shew Mr. A. to be so well reconciled to the fruition of his expectations, as the indifference would indicate in which he pronounced their anticipation to Deodati?"

to last, was in a strain of perfect good humour, and indeed of high hilarity and free conviviality.

I am as ever, yours,

JOHN ADAMS.

P. S. I considered you as one of my own House. They called me venerable Father of New-England. I resented that, because if there was any pretence for calling me Father of New-England, there was equal pretence for calling me Father of Kentucky and Tennessee. I was therefore willing to be thought the Father of the Nation.

J. A.

Mr. Wm. Cunningham.



LETTER XXXVII.

FITCHBURG, *May 6, 1809.*

Dear Sir,

I was duly favoured with yours of the 24th ult. The species of sensibility excited by your Letters in March, are defined by the interest I take in whatever affects your repose, your happiness, and your just claims on the affections, confidence and gratitude of a Country reared under your paternal care. If it

can be necessary to be more particular, they were the various and refined emotions springing, as in their native source, from the contemplation of an unexampled instance of neglected virtue, unruffled yet not unhurt, at the remembrance of the unprovoked waywardness it had experienced.

I should receive with much pleasure, an account of all the reasons you had for giving the public your interlocutory discourse with the Representative of the Elector of Saxony. *One* reason is extremely obvious, and was regarded with equal grace and fitness—it was, to shew, that there had not grown out of ingratitude a more numerous nor a more flagitious progeny than are generally, if not legitimately, produced in the heats of party, and consequently, not a greater than you were prepared to meet and manage in their frowardness. Introduced with such a presentiment, the conclusion of your letter to Wright and Lyman, which you have, probably, noticed to have incurred the accusation of whimpering, bears not the lovely weakness of a heart in the spontaneous effusion of its sorrow, but is expressed in

a happy union of dignified civility, and of graceful chastisement—in the point and purity of your exemplar Paul, not in the perturbed temper of Xerxes when he scourged the sea. The cause of your constructing that sentence in such a strain of touching tenderness, must cease to receive your censure—the fortunate occasion it afforded you of expressing the Nationality of your affections, atones for its fault. Confirmed, by your coincidence, in the correctness of my sentiments concerning the Federalists in general, I feel my confidence strengthened in the soundness of my knowledge of some of their late leaders. Alexander Hamilton was their head and hope. He was the Messiah, under whose reign a political millenium was to be enjoyed. Extravagant encomiums on his talents had lifted my estimation of him to a lofty height, and I readily confess, that in some interviews I had with him in New-York, the prop of his fame of a capacious understanding was perspicuously displayed. It is the pride of his friends that he was ambitious; but that this passion was in him kept down to virtuous emulation, upon which alone they can exult, is not so evident.

The testimony of Gen. Washington in his favour, if not extorted, is yet not unexceptionable. Washington, like yourself, had come under the displeasure of this paragon of propriety, and a threatening of a public exposure of his mistakes, was suspended over the head of Washington like the sword of Damocles, with this difference, that it should fall, not on falsehood but on indocility. This is a fact, unknown to the public. It is unknown, except to a very few in the Nation—*You sir, know what authority I have for the declaration,** General Washington was overawed with a menace, which gave you but the more resolution. Whether he or you had the higher reliance on the consciousness of right, and on strength of capacity to wield the cudgel against him—and “there can be no victory without crossing the cudgels”—are questions, which even if they were not now passing the test of experiment, I might with more propriety, postpone to posterity, than refer to your determination, or pronounce to you my own.

*This note is in the hand writing of Mr. Adams' correspondent. “Mr. Adams is himself my authority for all this, and more.”

Such is my opinion of the late Idol of the Federal party. If he would not like “ Moloch, vault over all impediments to seize the goal of his ambition,” his course was undeviatingly shaped towards it. At the fourth Presidential Election, it was, I suspect, his intention to keep the nation bewildered, to deceive them with directions, and to guide them by the circumvolutions of a wheel, as Tony did Marlow and Hastings, on Crack-skull Common. In the course of the election canvass, General Pinckney made an excursion into the eastern section of the union. On his return, Hamilton accompanied him from New-York to New-Jersey, where he had with him a lengthy interview. It may be presumed that a plan of proceeding was concerted. I do not derive this presumption from any suspicion of the honour of Pinckney, but it is irresistibly pressed by the unwarrantable assumptions of Hamilton on your advancement to the Presidency ; and, by his being offended at your very proper treatment of his officiousness. His agency had become active in the administration of the Government. His pride was inflated with the confidence which

was reposed in him, and by the submission implicitly paid by many to his opinions. It cannot be doubted, that having unsuccessfully aspired to the direction of the measures of which you were the appointed head, he wished a succession to your place of a Chief (if this is not contradiction) who would keep his bureau at New-York. But why have I told you all this ? You, to whom, without allusion, every secret was as promptly known, as were to Cicero the schemes of Cataline ? I have done it to let you see that I have not been studious of your story without acquiring some acquaintance with the *arcana-credenda*, so necessary to its explanation.

Interwoven as are the reasons for the dismission of Pickering, with other explanations, I think it probable that you will publicly reveal them, and release me from the injunctions I am under. They are the great mystery. A person ycleped General Eaton, and who affects to be in every secret, in a speech at a meeting of the Town of Brimfield, has very confidently asserted the cause to be Pickering's opposition to your nomination of Col. Smith for a General Officer.

Seeing, in some other papers, a notice of your Communications to the Boston Patriot, I shall send for that paper. I cannot conceal from you my apprehension, that in throwing yourself into the troubled element of dispute, you will meet with many angry surges—I have more satisfaction in communicating the conviction that you will reach the shore without calling upon Cas- sius. Forming yourself upon the model of Paul, you will be crowned with his success, before his judge and accusers.

With veneration and affection,

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Hon. John Adams.



LETTER XXXVIII.

QUINCY, June 7, 1809.

Dear Sir,

Yours of May 6th, I have not acknowledged, and cannot particularly consider the abundance of matter in it at present. If you see the Patriot, you will see that I am scribbling, twice a week. I am

hammering out a brass farthing into an acre of leaf brass. But I was determined that posterity should know the facts relative to my peace with France in 1800. I expect "angry surges" enough. Let them come. They cannot sink me lower than the bottom, and I have been safely landed there these eight years.

I rodomontaded with Lyman and Wright. They called me Father of New-England—I resented that, because if I was a Father at all, I was Father of all the States.—I am, in earnest, a friend to the whole Union, comprehending East, West, North and South, and I will not countenance a project of division.

John Q. Adams exposed Eaton's usurped title of General, which is directly against the Constitution, and opposed the grant of fifty thousand dollars to him, for which he had no just claim. That is enough for Eaton to revenge. It is true, that Pickering, at the instigation of Hamilton as I suppose, who was jealous of Smith as a favourite of Washington and a better officer than himself, excited a faction in the Senate against him, and to my knowledge propagated many scandalous falsehoods concerning him,

and got him negatived, though Washington had recommended him to me. But no personal or family considerations would have induced me to dismiss Pickering. My motives were public altogether: but I have not yet told you half of them.

A most profound silence is observed relative to my scribbles. I say not a word about them to any one: and nobody says a word to me. The Newspapers are as still as midnight. I suppose the sulphureous combustibles are preparing under ground, and the electrical fire collecting in the clouds. The storm of thunder and lightning, hail and rain, I expect will burst upon me all at once; and, the volcanoes burst out at the same time. If I am neither drowned in the rain, nor pierced with the bolts, nor blown into the atmosphere by the eruptions, I must be invulnerable.

Hic murus aheneus Esto. This heart be my wall of Brass.

I will not die for nothing. My pen shall go as long as my fingers can hold it.

I should be glad to know if you read the Pat-

riot, and what is thought of it, whether and wherein I have exposed myself?

In great haste,

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. Cunningham.

LETTER XXXIX.

FITCHBURG, June 14, 1809.

Dear Sir,

I am favoured with yours of the 7th inst. After telling me that the employment of your thoughts upon your public essays precludes your attention for the present, to my letters, I should be bereft of apology for filling again a whole sheet, if you had not also said that you are in no apprehension of being inundated. Amidst the heaviest outpouring which may be supposed to be congregating in the elements of human vengeance, I know you will stand like a conductor of electric fluid, which the lightning can only seize, envelope, and rush down its sides, but which it leaves uninjured to cool, and to stand again with its daring points, amid the storm. That you are a friend to an

indivisible union of the States, is most clearly evinced ; and you derive from your concern for the common welfare, as indisputable a right as was possessed by Augustus to the honourable and endearing title of the *Father of your Country.*

It was then because Mr. John Q. Adams had given the upstart scribbler, and pedantic mystagogue, Eaton, his deserts, that he spit at him the toady poison with which he was so much distended.

I take the Patriot, but either through miscarriage or purloining, I have failed of the reception of two numbers. You ask me “ what is thought of your communications, *and whether, and wherein you have exposed yourself?* ” I understand that a replication to your papers, will be a task assigned to, or assumed by, Coleman. But if you are not to be answered, some short sentence of scurrility will be invented and scattered.

An elderly and respectable Clergyman, on his way home from Boston, called on me last Friday, and continued over night. He informed me without any reserve, that Mr. Whitney.

your Minister, represented to him, that your resolution to rescue your reputation from reproach, is regarded by your whole family as an unfortunate determination, but that you are inexorable to their entreaties to desist. This is one of the tales of the table, and whether true or unfounded, ought not, I think to be propagated by Mr. Whitney without permission, but he is pas among the pragmatical. Perhaps the Clergy have got their cue. Osgood made a pass at you in his election Sermon. Some of the village papers, mere puppies of the pack, have scented, and wag their joy that they have dared to bark at some of your numbers. It is unnecessary to refer you to these papers, for like Alexander or Scander, you can enter the lists with none but kings. You may have noticed that the Repertory, which I consider as sounding the highest note on the Federal gamut, lately insinuated that Everett and Munroe were put by you into the typographical department to serve as the instruments of your ill-will towards certain characters. But such sportsmen at your reputation will find that they have been discharging popguns at an elephant.

'The enquiry whether, and wherein you have exposed yourself? imposes upon me the most difficult of duties, though one, which, towards a great mind, may be performed without dread. Before I reply, I cannot but remark on the free and flowing style in which your developement is written. To an application I made to you, last winter, for some sentiments, you answered, that you had neither hands nor eyes, nor time to write. The occasion which has brought you before the public, has been the Medea of your renovation. The struggle in which you are engaged may demand the strength of earlier years, and I am happy in the discovery, that you are in the vigor of the restored son.

In the number dated May —, wherein you describe the importunate and fatiguing earnestness of Hamilton to inoculate you with his visionary fears, you piteously and deridingly use in a notice of his person, the adjective *little*. I lamented the appearance of that descriptive word, because the stature of a man has no relation to a mensuration of his mind; and I lamented it, because it may be too chargeable with acrimony. If men were to rank high, or

to be undervalued, according as they are high or low on the size-stick, Maximin must have been the greatest, and Napoleon is the least of all adult monarchs. I know that you had too much provocation in the gross incivility, I might say rudeness, of Hamilton towards you; but would not your exposures of him, have had as much weight, had you omitted an expression of contempt? It is possible that as nature has not given me indemnity against such a stroke I may be too sensible of its wrong.

In the number dated May 29th, I have some doubt, whether you have not too incautiously asserted of Mr. Ames, that "despair of a re-election from the increase of the opposite party in his district, had induced him to decline to stand a candidate." At the election which next ensued his speech on the British Treaty, I know, he had not the most distant expectation of being re-chosen. This appears by his letters to Dr. Clark and others. Boston was in a ferment against the Treaty, and forwarded their Resolutions to Philadelphia by the wood-chuck, Revere. At the election referred to, Ames did not suffer his doubts, or despair of a re-election, to influence

him to decline being a candidate. "The delicacy of his health, and the despondency of his disposition" are very correctly assigned as causes of his refusal to be a candidate, and were not these enough to mention?

In this paper, you have unfolded many of the particulars which you disclosed to me at an interview, I had the honour to have with you at your house in August 1804, and which I preserved to assist me in the composition of some essays. Comparing its contents with my minutes, I cannot but think you more courteous than I am, in being willing to bestow so much unqualified praise on Mr. Jefferson. You strengthen an encomium on this gentleman by founding it on "*an intimate friendship for five and twenty years,*" and by a fellowship, perhaps as long in public business. According to my memorandums, you mentioned at the interview in 1804 that Mr. Jefferson while a member of the old Congress, frequently vented sarcasms against religion, and once, in debate spoke sneeringly of the scriptures, which drew you from your seat. The strength and severity of your observations in reply procured acknowl-

edgments from R. H. Lee and two others. You acknowledged Jefferson to have been a student in some branches of learning, but thought him superficially acquainted with the science of civil rule. You gave me a minute account of the framing of the declaration of Independence, and why and to what extent, Jefferson had a hand in it. And you told me, that when Mr. Jefferson was appointed Ambassador to France, he informed you, that he would not embark without his wife, and that he would not be exposed, with his family, to a British man of war for all this world. All these particulars, but without the most distant allusion to the source whence I derived them, have been incorporated into my political speculations ; and, I have reposed upon you for my authority. In addition to this in a letter, dated January 16th, 1804, after enumerating the various stations in his political life, you speak thus of Mr. Jefferson :—“ *Anecdotes from my memory would certainly be known. There are some there, known only to him and me. But they would not be believed, at least they would be said not to be believed, and would be imputed to envy, revenge,*

or vanity. I wish him no ill; I envy him not. I shudder at the calamities which I fear his conduct is preparing for his Country, from a mean thirst of popularity, an inordinate ambition, and want of sincerity." If you have written and spoken in this manner to others, and it should become public, would it not palsy your panegyric? I know that this enquiry can be very properly pursued by an "*analysis of investigation.*"

Again. In the third column, you say, Hamilton's friends, among the heads of departments, and their correspondents in Boston, New-York and Philadelphia, sympathized with him very cordially in his hatred of Gerry, *and of every other man who had laboured and suffered early in the Revolution.*" Have you not gone too far here? Were not Washington, Knox, and many more, "*who had laboured and suffered in the Revolution,*" in the confidence of Hamilton and his friends?

Respecting Hamilton's synopsis, handed to you by Mr. Tracy, I recurred to my notes. I find the army was to be one hundred thousand instead of fifty thousand. In the Patriot of last

Saturday you say that a majority in the States south of the Hudson, would have confederated under Burr, and a majority north of that river, under Hamilton—that Burr would have beaten Hamilton to pieces—what would have followed, you say, let the prophets foretel. Is not the mastery of the Chiefs as much a matter of prediction as any of the consequences? Is it not the main question?

I must on your account, as well as my own, defer a farther examination.

Is not the “review of the works of Fisher Ames,” written by the younger Pliny.

With veneration and affection,

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Hon. John Adams.

LETTER XL.

QUINCY, June 22, 1809.

Dear Sir,

I most sincerely thank you for your excellent letter of the 14th.—It contains an abundance of matter that deserves, and shall

have my most serious consideration. But at present I have not time to be serious. I had a delicious laugh with my family. I said nothing till we were all at table at dinner: My wife, my two daughters in law, my niece, Miss Louisa Smith, and my two grand daughters, misses, just entering their teens. My son was at Cambridge. I assumed a very grave countenance, and said I had received information, from fifty miles distance, that I had given offence to my family. I was very sorry to hear it, I wished to know which it was, that I might make my apology or give some satisfaction. Lord ! Who ? What ? Why ? what, sir, can you mean ? sounded instantly from all quarters.

I learn that my family is grieved at my Letters in the Newspapers, and have intreated me to desist, but that I obstinately go on to their mortification. The whole table was in a roar at this. My Wife had read every line, I believe, but one letter, before it went to the press. She was not alarmed. My two daughters declared they had never said a word. My two grand daughters cryed out, that on the contrary nothing delighted them so much as to read

them. Louisa, I know, said I, never said any thing for she is no talker. Aye but I have said something, for I was in company with ladies in Boston a few days ago, who were lamenting that you were writing, and said it was unnecessary and below your dignity. I was very much provoked and said, why should not my uncle vindicate himself, as well as any other gentleman? My daughter in law said "I know sir that your two sons are very much delighted that you have taken the subject up." This I knew as well as she did.

Never, sir, was a more groundless report or a more sheer fabrication. Mr. Whitney never could have said any such thing.

A number of these dastardly lies have been made and circulated, but I regard them no more than the croak of the Tree Toad.

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. Cunningham.

LETTER XLI.

FITCHBURG, *June 30, 1809.*

Dear Sir,

I received, by the last mail, your esteemed favour of the 22d inst. The unit-

ed testimony of your most amiable family in repulsion of the calumny which was said to have originated with Mr. Whitney has not disappointed me. Should it become again a topic at your social board, I pray that my affectionate respects may go along with it to the company.

In my last I taxed your patience pretty largely with my comments on your publications in the Patriot. As you have received them with the indulgence due to their intention, I feel encouraged to proceed, and to lay upon you the unassessed part of these comments, as heavily as your warrant will authorize.

Several of your letters shew throughout the hand of Ulysses. The passages of beauty in them, and of harmony with your other works, which frequently occur, I mark as I proceed. But I shall be more afraid of offending you with their enumeration, than I am with pointing out any instances of defect or disagreement—these, for that is my commission, I must seek, and find Cæsar, if I can, in contradiction with himself. I must apprise you before I go farther, that my receipt of the Patriot has been again

interrupted ; and those which get to hand I cannot secure against an avaricious curiosity. I passed over a paragraph in the letter dated May 29th, which I will now notice, not because it contradicts any thing you have before said, but to shew you, that the distance between you when President, and Mr. Jefferson will be accounted for, upon principles which may be supposed to have been then operative on your mind. In the letter you say, "We parted as good friends as we had always lived ; but we consulted but very little together afterwards. Party violence soon rendered it impracticable, or at least useless." Here you give the cause of the distance between you, and it will be admitted on your credibility—but, in the "Discourses on Davila," you said (as I recollect the passage) that it would be impolitic for, and you give reasons why, a Chief should refrain from an intimacy with the second in power."

When I read your letter to the printers of the Patriot dated June 7th, I regretted having made objections to the epithet *little*, used in a preceding number, because it was, compared with the contents of this, a small article : and because.

from a natural obstinacy in adhering to what we once advance, they may have insensibly assisted in strengthening a doubt, whether you have adopted the method of treating Hamilton, the best adapted to the satisfaction of the public of your own vast superiority. Your letter to the printers begins with a quotation from Hamilton, which you call "a phantom, conjured up to terrify minds and nerves as weak as his own." But you immediately add, that his opinion was embraced by some, of whose "sense and firmness," you had good expectations. In aiming a blow at Hamilton, have you not struck, indiscriminately, his friends and followers, and angered them with the accusation, rather aggravated than alleviated, of mental and nervous weakness? In lieu of the measure which had been proposed by Hamilton, "we might," you say, "as well petition the King and Parliament of Great Britain, to take us again under their gracious protection." "Is any one certain that Great Britain would consent to it, if we should propose it?" This enquiry is in your own words, as contained in your answer to the address of the Grand Jury of the county of Ulster

in the State of New-York, dated Sept. 26, 1798, in which you declared your disbelief, that Great Britain would again receive us in the character of Colonies. Is the reply to Hamilton and the reply to the Jury of the same complexion? Again—You say in the letter under consideration, that “Mr. Murray must have gone to Paris with his full powers, or must have communicated them to Mr. Pichon—The French Government must have appointed a Minister to treat with him—their full powers must have been exchanged.” Was this etiquette necessarily to be followed on the adoption of Hamilton’s plan of having a minister, resident at a neighbouring Court, empowered, and provisionally instructed to treat with France? His words are:—“with eventual instructions predicated upon appearances of approaching peace.” Is it unusual or improper to give such instructions? Is it not customary for an offending power, inclined to reparation, to sound the disposition of the injured nation, and to pass propositions to it through its functionary at another Court? You contend, and correctly, that it is not only customary, but proper, and that what comes through

such a channel is entitled to attention. Admitting this, and that the advances must have come from that side, were not the objections to Hamilton's plan founded on its being less expedient than your own, rather than on its impracticability, or on the embarrassments to its execution? The secrecy recommended did not, I think, betray forgetfulness of the Constitution. "You might" he says, "secretly and confidentially have nominated." To whom? The Senate. Did his recommendation mean any thing more than the usual injunction? And would his design have been exposed to defeat if the nomination had been dishonourably promulgated? Such promulgation would not have made the appointments an overt act of the Government, which is all, that he wished, for the sake of appearances to have avoided. In one of your Letters, you suggest that the President's privy council, should be under an oath of secrecy. In the appointment of Ambassadors, the Senate are that Council—Can Hamilton be blamed for presuming on the honour which can alone supply the omission of an oath? If, however, his system had, as you assert, no other motive than

to shun giving umbrage to England, it is impossible that it should be condemned with too much severity, or treated with too much contempt. You go on and say:—"Besides, this would have been the very indirect and circuitous mode which Mr. Hamilton so deeply deplored." It would, indeed, have been a circuitous mode, but so far from the case in which he deplored being so, he thought, as he asserts, that a due regard to our honour restricted us to that mode in every farther effort of our own to produce an eclaircissement with France. It is obviously true, that the circumstances, which give a nation a right to demand an act of condescension of another, ought to keep her stubbornly resolved against her own humiliation. If Hamilton sincerely believed that the honour of the nation stood opposed to an embrace of the overtures which had been made, can he be accused of attempts upon your fidelity, and on the faith of the Government in endeavouring to dissuade you against meeting them?

You hint, in the next Letter, that, with views to hostilities with France, Hamilton intended to encumber the intercourse with her: and, you

rest a presumption of his disinclination to peace. on his ardour for military fame; on his recommendation to provide an Army of a magnitude disproportioned to our dangers; on some expressions of concern for his personal safety without military protection, on the extinguishment, by peace, of this refuge, and on his insisting that France should, contrary to the confidence you presume he had she would not, send a Minister here. I feel the weight of this presumption—but, would it not have been better, that you should have forborne to do more than to bring to light the facts which favour it, and to have left to others the inference of “Thus it is, when self-sufficient ignorance impertinently obtrudes itself into offices”—and—“when ambition undertakes to sacrifice all characters, and the peace of Nations, to its own private interest?”

You conclude the letter of the 7th, with an insinuation of Hamilton’s destitution of the Military knowledge of a drill Sargeant.—You speak of the inglorious passions excited in him by the greater capacity and assiduity of another Zieten, with whom he was connected in his Military

command—and of the “puerilities” which degraded him below “the awkwardest boy at college.” A retort, like that of Mr. Pitt upon Sir Robert Walpole, expressed before the excitements to it have opportunity to subside, is regarded by mankind with more favour, than a retort, in the same spirit, uttered long after its provocation had passed by. Had you reviewed the reasons why it is so, I think you would have been more sparing.

In loading so liberally the memory of Hamilton, have you conformed to the counsel inculcated in the “*Discourses on Davila*,” in the thirty-first and last number, respecting the rivalries of great families? And, in thus loading him, have you not, injuriously to yourself, inflamed the feelings of many, who, with much fondness, cherish his remembrance? Can he, without a reflection upon Washington, be accused of an incapacity to “*teach tacticks to his troops?*” Can he, without a reflection upon Jay and Madison, be charged with “*puerilities*,” when, in concert with these gentlemen, he made an exposition of the Constitution, which is appealed to in Congress, and in our Courts, as a standard?

Can he, without a reflection upon several Universities, and upon all our historians, be ranked below "*the awkwardest boy at College*," when those have conferred on him their highest honours, and these have been lavish in encomiums on his talents? Even Mrs. Warren, strongly prejudiced against him, is not an exception. Would it not have been better to have defined with perspicuity, as you have done, the reasons for your proceedings with respect to France, and to have left to the reader the inference of Hamilton's mistakes?

Soon after Gov. Jay returned from his last embassy to Europe, I dined with him at his house in New-York, with a large party, of whom Hamilton was one. The Governor, after Mr. Hamilton withdrew, spoke of the estimation in which he was held in Europe, and said that he was the first in fame there of the Americans. And he gave his opinion very freely, that the talents of Hamilton were not overrated. Talents so ably defended, will not be likely to be carried by a *russe de guerre*. It was in this view, that I at first had thoughts of giving you this information, but since I have seen your let-

ter of the 22d inst. I have another motive sufficiently audible in silence.—When I told you, and gave some reasons why the Federalists could not have preferred Mr. Jay for President, I may have reckoned without my host.

What a slap in the letter of the 22d have you given the Monticellonian sage, in asserting your superiority to the same sacrifices which he refused to make, in the service of his Country ! The resolution which you adopted, of Martin Luther, was as aptly adapted to your situation as to your character. A Revolution as important to mankind as the reformation in 1517, took place in 1775, and of the one you were as much the head as Luther of the other.

Again—Your letter published last Saturday, dated June 10th, begins with a reflection on Hamilton's venal appetites. You had alluded to them before ; and, if they were founded on the affair with his paramour, the bonaroba Reynolds, are you not unkind in laying open that wound ? It is an aphorism of Lavater, that, “ He who has genius and eloquence sufficient to cover or excuse his errors, yet extenuates not, but rather accuses himself, and unequivocally

confesses guilt, approaches the circle of immortals." It will not be disputed, that he who penitently makes this confession, obtains acquittance at the bar of reason and religion. I have no occasion, on my own account, to be an apologist of incontinence. It is a crime which empties a poisonous vial into that little fountain of connubial bliss, in which the finest feelings of our nature have their fullest play.

These, sir, are some of the reflections which sprung up in my mind on the broken reading, I haye as yet had, of your public letters. It is to *you*, and to *you* only, I communicate them, and that according to your desire. I have made them singly with a view to the splendour of your glory through successive ages. If, as is said, there is an adaptation in the contents of your letters, to the recovery, by your family, of departed power, I cannot recognize it. I lament that any prejudices are existing to weaken the estimation by the public of the most exalted excellence.—They will relax under the just encomiums pronounced by the impartial, when they would be riveted by the egotism expressed by the interested—May they give

way in respect to yourself and your family, till you shall become as dear to the American people as were the Medici to the Italians.

If the reflections I have offered are of no weight, I may be the more easily convinced for having an inclination to be converted. If, on the contrary they are of any strength, you may receive them in season to be serviceable.

In my humble opinion, your remarks on Hamilton's pamphlet should have been untinctured with asperity. "He who renders full justice to his enemy shall have friends to adore him." The shaft which is tinged with gaul, thrown by what hand it will, can never pierce like Ithuriel's spear. Is the character of Lord Mansfield less esteemed because he was a mark for the polished arrows of Junius? You were raised higher above the reach of envy or malice. Your expressions censuring Gen. Hamilton which occasioned him to write his "*most famous letter*," were uttered confidentially to Mr. Pickering, and Mr. McHenry, and by the latter, as you suppose, were dishonourably betrayed to Hamilton. You said no more than was exacted by the duty of your station, and consequently nothing unallowable. The de-

mands made by Hamilton were very indefinite, and unauthorised by the laws of honour. These truths would not perish in oblivion—the mists in which they have been obscured, will be dissipated ; and, the public will yield their minds to their just operation. “Nothing,” says an acute observer “is more impartial than the stream-like public ; always the same and never the same ; of whom, sooner or later each misrepresented character obtains justice, and each calumniated, honour.” Another, less known to fame, but not less accurate in his remarks, observes :—“Talents which are before the public, have nothing to dread from the transient misrepresentations of party spleen or envy. In spite of opposition from any cause, their buoyant spirit will lift them to their proper grade.” “The man who comes fairly before the world, and who possesses the great and vigorous stamina which entitles him to a niche in the temple of glory has no reason to dread the ultimate result ; he will, in the end, most indubitably receive that distinction.”

With veneration and affection, I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Hon. John Adams.

LETTER XLII.

FITCHBURG, July 24, 1809.

Dear Sir,

To my letter of the 30th ult. I have not been favoured with an answer. I feel an uncertainty from which I wish to be relieved, whether that letter got to your hands.

What is this new freak of England? Can it be, that we are only acting a farce of "Who's the Dupe?" If so, we will stop the play, and exhibit "Venice Preserved, or the Plot Discovered." Can she think, that if we refuse to march directly to a point, she can bring us to it by carrying us, *nolens volens*, through Pemlico into Holborn, and through Pall mall into Finsbury square? Can she think, that, after the manner of a Persian Monarch, she can crop off our noses and that we will remain content because our heads are spared? We must consider our country as our parent, and, in any difficulty, we must be emulous towards it of the conduct of the son of Anchises towards his father. Or, like Manlius, we will give to its accuser the option of death, or its exemption from dishonour.

Mr. Erskine's letters, though a more full, may

have even a less faithful sign of friendship, than Cressida's glove given to Troilus on her departure from Troy from the Grecian Camp—*Ubi jus incertum, ibi jus nullum.*

With veneration, &c.

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

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LETTER XLIII.

QUINCY, *July 31, 1809.*

Dear Sir,

I received in season your favour of the 30th June as well as that of July 24th, and thank you for both.

The first is full of the candour and frankness of true friendship, and deserves my mature consideration. I have not been able to answer it, for I have been very busy, and my son's destination and preparations for departure, have claimed all my attention. It is an heartrending stroke to me. I may see him no more. I hope his absence will not be long. *Aristides is banished because he is too just.* HE WILL NOT LEAVE AN HONESTER OR ABLER MAN BEHIND HIM.

I am in a fair way to give my criticks and enemies food enough to glut their appetites. They spit their venom and hiss like serpents. But no facts are denied, no arguments confuted. I take no notice of their billingsgate. Let it boil and broil. I have had their secret hatred for ten years, for twenty years, for all my life indeed. And I had rather have their open hostility than their secret. I never hoped for mercy from *British Bears and Tory Tigers*. Their system would lead this country to misery and I will not follow it.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. Cunningham.

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LETTER XLIV.

FITCHBURG, Aug. 9, 1809.

Dear Sir,

I duly received your favour of the 31st ult. The separation from you of your son, would be, I knew, as painful to you both as was the parting of Paris and Priam, when the son took leave of the Father for Lacademon:

“British Bears and Tory Tigers” are not intended for an indiscriminate application to the Federalists. From the manner in which, in your letters, you have spoken of Mr. Jay, Judge Chase, Judge Dana and others, it is evident that you consider many of the Federalists as Hesperian Dragons guarding the tree of Liberty. But *Bears and Tigers*, of whatever cast or Country, which are like

“That mad Bull, whom Marcius lets loose,
On each occasion, when he’d make Rome feel him.
To toss our laws and liberties in the air,”

I would most freely join you in hunting down.

I shall forbear troubling you with any farther remarks on your public letters. No one can enter more deeply into your true situation. I know the zeal, and ardour, and extent, and constancy, and disinterestedness, of your exertions, to stretch out to your country safe leading strings for her infancy, in circulating lessons to guard her childhood and to give her, at last, the stamina of sound maturity.

Perceiving, at first, that your determination to publish, originated in circumstances which

would put all the virtues of the Man, and all the greatness of the first Character in the Nation, to the severest trial, I gazed with eagerness on the spectacle. And, it may be, because my fears fluttered too much in a sense of our infirmities; or, that my expectations of a finished example were so sanguinely set as to make me too vigilant of a failing, that I thought I saw it—as too eager a gaze on a brilliant spotless mirror, will soon stamp it somewhere with a proof of the imperfection of our sight. I have another apology. At a conversation, to which I have before referred, you said of Hamilton, that you had confided a son to his instruction—that when Vice-President, you was ex officio, connected with him in the commission on the sinking fund, and that your concurrence with him was indispensably required to enable him to carry his measures against Mr. Jefferson, another commissioner—and you was totally confounded in any attempt to explain his conduct in his letter concerning you, aside from supposing it the offspring of a brain distempered with ambition—on this passion you descended, and ended your remarks upon him, with the

expression of an hope that he was sincere in the professions of his last hour ; and, turning your eyes upwards, you breathed a desire for his forgiveness—and acceptance.

The breaking out of a stifled resentment is generally like the springing of a cork from a bottle of porter—it is sudden, and the whole contents come foaming after it. This, you know, is the accusation made against you ; but with whatever degree of malice this accusation may be made, you can render it harmless as the viper, which hung for a moment on the hand of Paul. I think, with Seneca, that “a wise man is out of the reach of fortune, but not free from the malice of it ; and all attempts upon him are no more than the arrows of Xerxes ; they may darken the day, but they cannot strike the sun. There is nothing so holy, as to be privileged against sacrilege. But, to strike and not to wound, is anger lost ; and he is invulnerable who is struck and not hurt. His resolution is tried ; the waves may dash themselves upon a rock, but not break it. Temples may be profaned and demolished, but the Deity still remains untouched.”

Your letters, if they are not history, they are nearly allied to history ; in this view of them, together with the certainty of their transmission to future times, they ought not, and I trust they will not lack, nor contain any thing to deprive them of an association with the memoirs of the Cardinal de Retz, and Duke of Sully, described by Blair, as the only works of this kind, which approach to the usefulness and dignity of history.

I have read your last letter to Perley. It is well known that you draughted the Constitution of the Commonwealth, but I have no remembrance of your making before a public confession of it. Your opinion must have great weight in settling any point of controversy.

If you have seen Ramsay's Life of Washington you noticed that the Biographer glided into the error you have lately exposed. He says :— “ No sooner had the United States armed, than they were treated with respect, and an *indirect* communication was made, that France would accommodate all matters in dispute on reasonable terms :—Mr. Adams embraced these overtures.” It was certainly right to have an error

corrected which was spreading its roots through our histories.

With veneration, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

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LETTER XLV.

[This letter was returned by Mr. A's positive request. The evidence that such a letter was written, is, the envelope, superscribed in Mr. A's hand writing and bearing his frank together with the mail marks of the Quincy Post Office. Its contents and character may be inferred from the allusions and quotations in Mr. C's answer, which follows.] Post mark Aug. 14, 1809.

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LETTER XLVI.

FITCHBURG, *August 18, 1809.*

Dear Sir,

The last mail brought me your favour of the 8th of July with a postscript of the 13th inst. Whether you had received my letter of the 9th inst. does not appear by your fa-

your. You request the return of the letter, to yourself uncopied—you will find it inclosed, but if you have no particular reasons to the contrary, you would oblige me by entrusting it to my possession. It contains many things which I admire, and many before unknown to me.

I regret that my suggestions have cut out so much work for your reflections; but, you will own, that when you asked my opinion, I was bound in the fidelity of friendship to give it to you freely and fully; and it is a satisfaction to me, that, you are sensible of the sincerity of my affection.

The thoughts I have given you on your public Letters, have all been shaped in a situation to make me timid of their soundness. Feeling myself restrained from the right, if I had the opportunity, of consulting others, I have sent you my opinions direct from the place of their conception, without a swaddling cloth, a tunic, or a pin from any other hand. It is not common that a judgment is made up and communicated upon an important subject, without a previous interchange of thoughts, or without examining how it comes out from the menstruum of other men's minds.

The motives for your writing, as you unfold them to me, are deserving of all regard—"To abash the guilty—to humble the insolent—to expose the nakedness of folly, and to strip the mask from the visage of knavery," are subjects rising in importance above every other, in a pure Republic.

After I had noticed in some of your public Letters, some reflections upon the Senate, I reviewed the reasons for its institution; and have collated the thoughts of many civilians upon such a branch in Government, particularly Sir William Blackstone's. According to your letter now before me, you consider the country reduced, by the Senate, to the condition of the Kilshonites, who were anathematized for the refusal of their help. I may coincide with you on this subject, but the contrary opinion was too deliberately imbibed to be inconsiderately abandoned. If it be a "Fortress of exclusive party," and a "Barrier against moderation and impartiality," (and experience is your lecturer, while reason only is mine) may you not be an unheeded Capys, nor an unsuccessful Laocoön, when you warn of its dangers, and when you smite its sides.

Of the prostitution of power to the brutal purposes of sensual gratification, we know, to the disgrace of our nature, of too many instances. Such gross declension is more shocking among an infant people, than among nations grey in crime ; as vice is more odious in a youth than in a hardened sinner. In this view, I think it most lamentable, that in your opinion "*the panegyrical orations of Ames and Otis*"—and the "*Funeral made by the bankers in Boston*" for Hamilton, exceeded in atrocity and impiety, the King's brothel of Belview, and the Adonian Temple of Madame Du Barry.

You say, "*I know not the history of this man.*" I certainly do not if your portrait shews his lineaments.

The "*infidelity of the worst kind, propagated by him in our Army, when in the family of Washington,*" I am unacquainted with.

You say I have never read Hamilton's pamphlet, &c. It was circulated, at first, among his confidential friends, one of whom, Judge Bourne, lent it to me the day he received it.

You have, indeed, been the target for the poisoned arrows and chewed balls of malice,

envy, and revenge. It is the unfailing lot of all greatness to be so.

In answering your letter, I have reserved to the last the concupiscence of Hamilton.

Knowing the impetus you felt when speaking of Hamilton, I have been fearful whether you would not get into too hot a temper, and thus disease your rebukes with the fever of animosity. I have thought that you would have been safer to have followed Plato, and to have said, “*Speusippus, do you beat that fellow, for I am angry.*” But, sir, you set him before me in new and horrid odiousness. Of “*his debaucheries in New-York and Philadelphia*”—of “*his audacious and unblushing attempts upon ladies of the highest rank and purest virtue*”—of “*the indignation with which he has been spurned*”—and of “*the inquietude he has given to the first families*,” I never before heard a word. By this he was infamous as Caligula, when he told Asiaticus, in public, what kind of a bed-fellow was his wife.”—And as insolent as the Duke of Orleans when he took the Duke of Burgundy into his cabinet embellished with the portraits of the women he had enjoyed, among which the

picture of the Dutchesse of Burgundy was conspicuously placed. If he was all this he was abandoned beyond reclamation—Candor and charity must be dumb in his excuse—Avouch, sir, all this to be true, and I shall consider myself bound by all my duties to my family, to virtue, to my country and to heaven, to dress him in a suit from the devil's wardrobe, and hold him up to the execration of mankind. Cato valued himself on his integrity, and was, it is said, addicted to intemperance; but the friends of Cato prized him so highly for his main excellence, that they looked upon his occasional intoxication with indulgence. Thus I have understood it of Hamilton—he set the estimation made of his uprightness against that which might be formed from the confession of his lewdness, and he determined that the weight of his cardinal virtues would preponderate over every defect, and forever keep that scale immoveably down. But could he think—would any body believe, that his peculation, if true, as insinuated in an ephemeral “History of the United States for the year 1796,” was a crime less aggravated than the robbery of virtue of its

unbought, invaluable and irredeemable possession? Vain dependence on the clemency of mankind!

In his "Remarks, explanatory of his conduct, motives and views," in meeting Burr, written the day before the interview—and in his will, he speaks with the most moving tenderness of his "Wife and Children." In his last hour, according to Dr. Moore, he was collected, tranquil, and resigned as Addison—If there had ever been a ————— I should be confounded.

With veneration, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

N. B. There are some parts of your Letter unnoticed in my answer. I had not time to examine it so minutely as I want to—I have almost a mind to detain it for your second thoughts, or until I write again. If you will favour me with its farther use, I will, if you should wish it, send you a duplicate.

W. C.

LETTER XLVII.

[This letter was returned by the express injunctions of Mr. A. Its existence and contents

rest upon the same evidence as letter 45. Post-mark Aug. 25, 1809.]

LETTER XLVIII.

FITCHBURG, *Sept. 9, 1809.*

Dear Sir,

On our way home from Quincy, we were detained by the kindness of friends until last evening. Of the pleasant events of our excursion, none are recollected with more delight than the attention we received at your house, nor have I to express my obligations to any but yourself, for any part of the secret history you orally communicated. Your letter of the 22d ult. I received with the seal unviolated, and agreeably to your injunctions, and my promise at parting with you, I enclose it.

“Integrity,” as I used the term in application to Hamilton, was not to be understood in the common acceptation. In that acceptation it barely rises to a virtue, for it is wholly equivocal whether it be the effect of any innate goodness, or produced by the restraints of law, and by calculations of advantage; considerations which keep many knaves from the crimes of theft, robbery, &c. and which give to such a suspicious

anxiety to shine in the varnish of an opposite reputation. Of all the qualities of a virtuous soul, pure integrity is the brightest—it takes no counsel from human law, nor from even the common propensities of our nature ; the perfection from which it emanated, is its sole example and security—of this divine virtue, you have shewn me that Hamilton was totally destitute.

His Religion, as has been the case with thousands, might have been accommodated to political changes—I thank you for pointing me to the winding in the labyrinth from which his ostentation of religion sprang. Of his lubricity, what an odious picture you have drawn ? Oh ! he was too foul for “ ablution by all the waters of Zemzem.” I have not time and am too much fatigued to say more.

You propose to give me an account of “ his talents and services in another letter.” I wish to see a connected chain of these services, and their magnitude ; since it has been announced by Coleman that years are to be occupied by some best gifted genius in penning his life.

With veneration, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, Jr.

Hon. John Adams.

LETTER XLIX.

FITCHBURG, Sept. 23, 1809.

Dear Sir,

My letter of the 9th inst. had an enclosure, which it is so interesting to myself, as well as you, that it should get to your possession, that I cannot suppress my solicitude to be advised of its safe reception.

The present covers the last *National Ægis*, in which you will find your juvenile letter to your friend Webb, which I have caused to be inserted in that paper according to your intimations on the first of the month.

If, in the introduction, I have not mounted to your just encomium, I have some refuge against mortification, in the knowledge, that a perfect delineation of greatness can be the work of none but a master's hand—and, I have more than this refuge in the consciousness of a disposition to lift you to your just grade.

I capitalized the prophetic parts of the letter, which have been fulfilled; and italicized the Latin, neither of which were done in the Anthology. But with all my care, the Printers disregarded the Latin word, *diræ*, and used, as

the Anthology had done before them, the English word *dire*, and direfully it looks—The works of an author are so frequently garbled at the press, and his feelings disturbed by its orthographical inaccuracies, that even the case-men should be something above mechanicks.

Three days of this week, I was absent on a journey to Boston. I passed some hours at the Athenæum, and at the office of its founder, with even more satisfaction than I had anticipated—An enterprise of so much utility, originating in the foresight and public spirit of Mr. Shaw, and seconded by his urbanity, industry and exactness, cannot fail of reaching a point that will give him an immortality of renown.

With veneration, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Hon. John Adams.

LETTER L.

QUINCY, Sept. 27, 1809.

Dear Sir.

Yesterday I received your favour of the 23d and had before in its season received

that of the 9th in good order, its enclosure unviolated.

My boyish letter to Dr. Nathan Webb appeared with more propriety in a Worcester paper than any where else. *It is demonstrative evidence that John Adams' Declaration of Independence was one and twenty years older than Thomas Jefferson's.* To understand my letter it is necessary to have lived at the time when it was written, when we were so angry with Great Britain for misconducting American affairs, and for leaving us exposed to the murders and depredations of French and Indians, that from my heart I wished we were independent of her, and left to ourselves to take care of our enemies, or perish in the struggle.

I presume the Latin word should be "dira" the "dreadful things" "the horrors" of war.—I remember the word "dire," and direful and dira were very fashionable among the boys in College, out of which I had just before migrated. but enough of this childish business. The thing is an oddity, that's all. You have made enough and more than enough of it, in your introduction.

Mr. Shaw's Athenæum is an honour to Boston, to Massachusetts and to North America, and I hope no Tory Junto will be able to deprive him of the honour of it. Yet he and his Athenæum are too much under their thumbs. *Poor Democrats, Republicans and still poorer Americans, are at the feet of John Bull and his Calves. Matters cannot be much longer minced. The truth must out.*

With regard, &c.

I am your friend and relation,
JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. William Cunningham, Jr.

LETTER LI.

FITCHBURG, Oct. 17, 1809.

Dear Sir,

Your favour of the 27th ult. arrived when I was at Worcester, attending a session of the Supreme Court, to get some redress for a most gross and injurious fraud. Immediately on my return, I set out for Boston, whence I returned last evening. These jaunts have occasioned this delay in the acknowledgment of your letter.

“Poor Democrats, Republicans, and still poorer Americans, are,” you say, *“at the feet of John Bull and his Calves.”* Were I convinced of this, I would, as you have done, give it registry in my mind, and “every day I’d turn the leaf to read it”—and like you, I would spare no labour to “strew it in the common ear.” But if the apprehension of this be only “the strong and swelling evil of your conception,” then should I sorrow at seeing its currency rendered irresistible by the authority of your august name. On so trite and so sharply contested a subject, the arguments are embodied for the use of either side. I have frequently passed them in review, and although it is evident that pride, and policy, and the insatiable spirit of revenge, can operate on Great Britain to induce her to attempt an ascendancy in this country, yet that the Federalists (the calves of the Bull) are estranged from their own country in subserviency to the views of England, is an idea, in my present opinion, every way inadmissible. I have seen too much virtue, too much intelligence, and too much patriotism employed in the contrivance and in the prosecution of the Federal plan, to take, as yet,

so ungrateful an impression. As a corollary to this accusation, the Federalists are denominated Monarchists. But Elliot, who wrote after he had been initiated into the secrets of Democracy, says in his tenth letter, "Monarchical principles are confined to a few individuals in our country, and among those individuals may be placed some of our most ardent Republicans." I acquit alike the Republicans and the Federalists from any fondness for Monarchy, though I do believe that this system will be engendered in our abuses of a milder form; and when it comes, it will come in chastisement of our negligence, as any hateful visitation, which, with due precaution, could have been avoided.

Every party, in every country, have, says Paley, a vocabulary of cant phrases and unmeaning terms, which they use to mislead the multitude—What a pity, that so fair a country should be rent asunder by such a jargon, and that she wants the knowledge necessary to enable her to repose with confidence and security, on the fundamental and scientific principles which can alone uphold her liberty and her peace? In one of your letters to Kalkoen, you

vindicated your countrymen against a devotion to persons—were they deserving the character you gave them in that letter, they would have, in their capacity, a better safeguard for their liberties, than would have resulted from any stratagem the framers of their constitution could have invented.

It is owing to the profound respect I pay to your opinions, that I am put to a pause on the question, whether the influence of England is so extensive and deadly as you imagine ; but I should be unfit for the examination ; if this respect could unsettle the independency of my own judgment. You see that I am claiming my share of the applause bestowed by you on all the Americans in the abovementioned letter to Kalkoen. If in general, an independency of thought were freely indulged, not in the obstinacy of ignorance, not in the more unmanageable inveteracy of party, nor in the disgusting affectation of wisdom, but in the calmness and confidence of a good intention, and of plain common sense, there would be but one party of the people. Such was your conclusion when you addressed

the Dutch civilian. But the misfortune is, that faction fattens on the soil of freedom, like the steed turned loose in clover, and is the more untractable for its better fare. To take another comparison : Faction buzzes over the body which gave it birth, and devours it, as the bees, according to Virgil's story of their production, fasten on, and become glued with the vitiated juices of the stag—and after the manner of these bees, in another stage of their history, faction, when it comes to its own strife, settles it with a king. The materials of such a faction constantly exist in the causes of government, but it is systematized and put in motion, either by those who are

“ So weary with disasters, so tugg'd with fortune,
That they'd set their life on any chance
To mend it, or be rid on't,”

or by those

“ Whom the wild blows and buffets of the world
Have so incens'd, that they're reckless what
They do.”

You have fully and forcibly described the impulse by which the heads of a faction are hurried on, in your examination of Needham's right Constitution of a Commonwealth, as I find it in the

third Vol. of your defence of the Constitutions of the United States, page 278, London edition. “*Continuation of power*,” you observe, “*in the same persons and families, will as certainly take place in a simple Democracy, or a Democracy by representation, as in an hereditary aristocracy, or monarchy—The continuation will be certain, but it will be accomplished by corruption, which is worse than a continuation by birth; and if corruption cannot effect the continuation, sedition and rebellion will be resorted to : FOR A DEGRADED, DISAPPOINTED, RICH AND ILLUSTRIOS FAMILY WOULD, AT ANY TIME, ANNIHILATE HEAVEN AND EARTH, IF IT COULD, RATHER THAN FAIL OF CARRYING ITS POINT.*”

In a sentence which follows, you suggest a truth which would overcome in the great bulk of mankind, every obstacle to their being slaves of a chief, rather than supporters of their country, for “it becomes,” you say, “more profitable and respectable too, except with a very few, to be a party man than a public spirited one.” And these are the reasons why a faction is always ostentatious, and why men grow into consequence who are of no greater worth

than Carr and Villiers,—and which make, indeed, braggarts in polities of men, empty, enthusiastic, visionary and outrageous, as were Bell, Maxfield and Nelson, converts to the Wesleyan system of divinity—which make in fine, imaginary adepts in polities, of such fairies as “Pease-blossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed.”—

“ Our country sinks beneath the yoke :
It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds.”

If these cuts of misfortune could serve us like the bite of Virgil’s *Culex* on the Shepherd, to warn us of the coming serpent, we should wake and stand on our defence. But it will not be so : for these dangers do not hiss till their deleterious power has unnerved the people ; but they allure like the Siren, singing till the moment of destruction.

Whether I am right or wrong in the view I take of our situation, I can satisfy myself in no other way than by retrospecting our history. To give you this review, would resemble an attempt to enrich an alcove with an imperfect copy of its own contents. I shall therefore,

with one or two exceptions, pass it over, intermixing with the little I shall recapitulate such reflections as I think are authorized by some acquaintance with the progress and fate of empires.

The war with England caused much political investigation; but it was soon perceived, that our most popular conclusions were rather compliments to the overweening vanity of all sciolists, than resting substantially on the true character of man, and on the sound principles in the science of civil government.

Several of our State Constitutions are strongly marked with the crudities of immature reflection. At the time of forming the National constitution, we had all, in imagination, become Lycurguses; and in public virtue we were all Catos. Yet with all our boasted wisdom and virtue, the instrument proposed to our consideration, for acceptance or rejection, did but just escape negation; and in my opinion, the exceptionable parts were the most necessary, and, of course, the most faultless. It was constructed for a wise and virtuous people; and what Anacharsis said of all laws when applied to the powerful.

might be safely said of this constitution, that it was slender as a spider's web for the government of any other people than such as performed more than half the work of government by the natural tameness of their tempers, and efficacy of their private examples. It went into operation under the most fortunate auspices ; and if any one great object of a public nature, more than another in which he was engaged, engrossed the mind of Washington, it was to give it such on outset as should ensure it a safe, an unbiassed, a dignified and a prosperous course ; such a course as should wring from its enemies more than their confession of its success—*their own undeviating pursuit of it.*

Soon after the coming in of Mr. Jefferson, I saw the growing mountain of our greatness shake by the turning of his body ; and I was satisfied his uneasiness would continue till he had shattered it into fragments. These fears were strengthened by the corresponding alarms you did me the honour to communicate. It is not necessary to pursue the steps of our declension any lower—to a prophet reclining on the page of history, and embracing within his view

the little space which has been occupied with our experiment, our end would be neither a difficult nor a distant prospect. The same history which authorizes the prediction of our close, gives the lessons by which all we have lost might be regained and kept ; but they will be disregarded. It stands before me visible, as in its vicinity is the aspiring *Ætna*, that our country, from the quantity and variety of its concealed combustibles, is doomed to undergo as violent and as awful convulsions, as those with which any people were ever cursed. If these calamities are not to be averted, the only remaining advantage in our power, is to procras- tinate their coming.—To mitigate their fury would be impracticable ; every thing will be done in a delirium which gathers equal ag- gravation from all attempts to assuage it, as from the most angry opposition. In the con- templation of these calamities by the true lover of his country, whether he view them as near or distant, every other consideration dwindleth in comparison with that of his obligation to the Commonwealth : and he only can be the real and approved friend of his country, who comes

to her altar with the offering, if need be, of his Isaac.

If government be a combination of the whole to repress the outbreakings of the disorderly, yet, with those who are, or with those who have been high in authority, this very government may be besieged, or used as an engine to give a more extended and a more pernicious influence to their own corruption. Such, if to such it were not in vain to moralize, might be told that

“The rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance.”

This is a general observation, connected with what precedes.

It appears by the last gazettes, that peace is likely to obtain between France and Austria. If peace be now desired by Buonaparte, it is because the harvest of war is gathered, and in the autumn of his Austrian affairs, the seeds can be scattered which, concealed under a winter's covering, can yet spread their roots, draw nutrition, and soon start afresh for another crop.—

“He speaks of peace, while covert enmity.
Under the smile of safety, wounds the world.”

He looks with a more angry mein upon us, which is a natural consequence of his growing might. We must deal with him, and with every other aggressor, in something stouter than our statutes, which are like the ashes of a burnt rope, having the form but none of the power of the cord.—One of these strings of ashes was blown away by a proclamation, and we regarded the scattered dust as the Egyptians did the falling of the nectæ, when they thought they could go abroad in safety—But the plague returned.

In your letter to the printers of the Patriot, which was published last Wednesday, you refer to Judge Dana, as the only person living, who can explain the style of the correspondence between yourself and Vergennes. When I saw this reference, I could not but lament that you had bestowed so many encomiums upon the Judge whenever you introduced his name. I have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with Judge Dana, but I know his reputation as well as of any man in the state, and I know him to be deserving of all that you have said of him ; but as you appear to depend upon

him to explain some passages in your despatches which have been made interesting, would not his representations be given and received with more satisfaction, had you noticed him with less attention? I beg you to pardon the freedom of this suggestion. I know not whether the doubt has occurred to any other person, but I confess, the instant I read the reference it sprung into my mind.

With veneration, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams,

Quincy.

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LETTER LII.

QUINCY, Oct. 23, 1809.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your favour of the 17th.—I know the integrity, talents and intelligence of great numbers of the Federalists: and have no doubt of the good intentions of the great body of that party: but of a great number of their leaders, and the most active of them especially, I have no better opinion than I

have of some of the leaders of the Republicans. By their writings they have deceived the people into an affection and confidence in England, and an abhorrence of France ; neither of which is well founded. The Funding system and Banking systems which are the work of the Federalists, have introduced more corruption and injustice, for what I know, than any other cause.

My confidence in Mr. Dana during the whole time we lived and acted together in Europe, ought not to have been concealed. I know that if he transmits to posterity any relation of the controversy between the Count De Vergennes and me, it must be founded on the letters that passed between us, which I possess as well as he. I can transmit it myself, if I should live : but as I care little about it, and it is not likely I shall live long enough to go through the plan I have in view, I shall probably leave it among a number of manuscript volumes, to be concealed forever from the public eye, or scattered and lost like the papers of Mr. Hancock and Mr. Samuel Adams. So many Federal lies have been published concerning the peace of

1783, that I was determined that all the papers relative to that transaction, should not be left for chance or cunning to mutilate or mangle.

With great regard,

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. Cunningham.

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LETTER LIII.

FITCHBURG, Oct. 28, 1809.

Dear Sir,

I have received your favour of the 23d. The sentence from your letter of the 27th ult. which made the theme of my answer, I understood as being extended to the whole body of the Federalists. Several circumstances conspired to induce me to make of it an unqualified application to that party. I cannot, and it is unnecessary to recite them all—two or three shall suffice. In your letter to the printers of the Patriot of June 10th, in the enumeration of the “opposition and embarrassments you had to overcome” you inserted—“*from that large body of Americans who revere the English.*” In the review of the works of Fisher Ames. by

my friend John Q. Adams, I saw that Ames was considered as one of the principals of such a body—And in the answer of Mr. Jefferson of the 3d ult. to the address of the Republican Citizens of the City and County of New-York, I noticed a very plain insinuation that the opposition to the embargo, and its supplementary measures, was induced entirely by a predilection in the opposers for another country than their own. Laying these and many things of the same complexion together, I could not but regard the sentence I quoted from your last letter as coming, “point from point to the full arming of the verity,” that our country, the land of proud freemen, was become in great extent, but pasturage for the progeny of foreign kine.

In the letter on my table, you restrict the appellation of Calves of John Bull, to the Leaders of the Federalists, of a great number of whom you “have no better opinion than you have of some of the Leaders of the Republicans.” By which I understand, that we have “cockerels that crow as they have heard the old one,” as well as calves that roar in the tone

of the great Bull. How are these Leaders distinguished? This Commonwealth, and I learn it is so in other states, is under the most complete organization of party against party. There is on each side, a Central Committee, a County Committee, and a Town Committee, all combined, as a chain by its links, of which the first is the jar that gives the whole, by one touch, a shock. Trace these links up to this first and break it off, and the breach, like the division of a worm would not only heal, while crawling, but would immediately put out more length. And this system of "a wheel within a wheel," is so contrived, that its whole energy is derived from the multiplicity of the cogs which keep it in operation—officers or Leaders are more numerous than in our militia, and are much better fitted for service. The one who was raised to the rank of *the* leader of the Federalists, has been five years dead. It was said, that "from his metal was his party steel'd," yet there appears to be no lack of sagacity nor of industry to carry on the system, now that he is gone; nor does it fail, notwithstanding he confessed himself to be one that could not cool his iron in

his own trough ; and notwithstanding you have since represented him as “ without bottom in voluptuousness :” so bad that,

“ Our wives, our daughters,
Our matrons, and our maids, could not fill up
The cistern of his lust, and his desire
All continent impediments would o'erbear
That did oppose his will.”

With veneration, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Hon. John Adams.



LETTER LIV.

QUINCY, Nov. 15, 1809.

Dear Sir,

I have received your favour of Oct. 28th.—I am very unexpectedly involved in occupations and correspondencies very disproportioned to the feeble forces remaining to a man of seventy-four, and which make it impossible for me to reply to the various important subjects of your letter.

With usual esteem, your friend

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. Cunningham.

LETTER LV.

FITCHBURG, Nov. 18, 1809.

Dear Sir,

Since my last of the 28th ult. I have not had the pleasure to hear from you. I lately received some information concerning you, which I deem it a duty of friendship to communicate. I had it from one of the supreme Junta residing at the "Head quarters of good principles." It is of a confidential nature though no secrecy was imposed—and is, that yourself and Mr. Gray are to be the candidates for the first and second offices in the Commonwealth. I have no doubt but you will find that "a bush lim'd for you." The information was probably given to me with a view to obtain my opinion whether you would allow yourself to be a candidate. I have not given an opinion, nor could I, although acquainted with the objections you made last year to Mr. John Q. Adams' being a candidate, speak any other way than hypothetically upon the subject.

If the project now agitated in the upper Chamber of the Caucus, by those who keep 'the body and the limbs of this great sport to-

gether," should not be shoved aside by any new occurrence in the rapid versatility of events, you may depend on being soon sounded on this affair.

The sayings and doings of one party, seem to be to the other but "stuff to make paradoxes." It may so appear in this case, but I believe the intention is, really, if possible, to tranquilize the Commonwealth by some greater unanimity in the designation of the first Magistrate. All I can say to yourself about it is what Ulysses said to Agamemnon:—You are one "in whom the tempers and the minds of all should be shut up." Could this confidence be effected by your presidency over the counsels of the Commonwealth, there is no consideration of a private nature that ought to get the ascendency over your obligations to your country. In no other view could I suppose your election auspicious to your peace or glory—in any other you would be happier as Atticus than as Cicero.

I think there is some pith in the Letters of Cobbett to the King. The smuggled system of Internal navigation pursued by Buonaparte may, if unobstructed in its prosecution, prepare

a torpedo for the British Navy. Buonaparte has as much valour and forty times the prudence of Anthony—He will let others “go a ducking,” and continue the plan of “fighting foot to foot,” until he can reduce his enemy to a condition that he will not fear to take a chance with him at Actium or Salamis.

With veneration, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Hon. John Adams.



LETTER LVI.

FITCHBURG, Nov. 22, 1809.

Dear Sir,

I have received your favour of the 15th inst. It is no more than I expected, that your elucidations of the great transactions in which you were uninterruptedly engaged through the different periods of their existence, and in the making of which you have repeatedly had occasion to make personal allusions, would necessarily lead you into extensive correspondencies. I think I told you as much soon after you commenced your public letters. I

really hope that your life, and health, and vigour will be continued to you unimpaired to carry you through, and many years beyond, the completion of your design. I shall take care not to interrupt nor retard your progress with my speculations. If it is true that “we bring forth weeds when our quick winds lie still,” you must bear abundantly of fruits, turned up so thoroughly as you are to ventilation—I wish you a great crop, and joy of the harvest. I know it would be unjust to yourself, and to your family, that you should be “the grave of your deserving.” I have hinted, that you had better leave your life to the pen of some Comines, but if none but yourself can do yourself justice,

“ ’Twere a concealment
Worse than death, no less than a traducement
To hide your doings.”

The expression in your letter of Sept. 27th, that “Poor Democrats,” &c. “are at the feet of John Bull and his Calves,” I should have let pass without objection, had I not thought it more chargeable with inconsistency than impropriety. By causing your letters to Kalkoen

to form a part of your present communications to the public, they are, I think, to be regarded as containing your present sentiments.

A subject of great delicacy I have thought I would take the liberty to mention. It is no less than to offer you some advice respecting your treatment of Hamilton, when you shall again resume the consideration of his conduct. It is a transgression of a rule to give counsel unasked, but I am stimulated beyond subjection to rules by what was suggested to me by your son, when I was at Quincy. He said that when you entered again on that topic "*the little*" (using some harsh epithet) "would have it," meaning, undoubtedly, that he would be lashed with severity. But, my dear sir, if you mean to give weight to your animadversions, should they not be stated with calmness and candour? Let it be admitted that he deserved to be treated as a stigmatic—let it be admitted that he took the example of Semiramis for proof that sensuality was connected with talents for governing, but recollect from the same example, that it may be the associate of injustice and inhumanity—let it be admitted, that the marble mausoleum

erected to his memory in New-York, should wear nothing but the indecent figures that Sesostris ordered to be sculptured on certain pyramids—let it be admitted that he was officious, assuming, ambitious and a libeller, yet injured as you feel yourself, what point can you possibly give your pen beyond a very candid and unruffled statement of such facts as will conduct the public mind to a just determination? Such a determination cannot eventually be avoided. This truth should be your consolation. It is the consolation of integrity, and the affliction of vice, that “the final impartiality of the public” will appear through every art that can be employed to blacken or to brighten. Pardon, great sir, this freedom—if you judge me rude—judge me friendly. “There is a silence of such magnitude, energy, decision, as to be singly worth a whole life of some men.”—I did regret that you broke this silence with regard to the person in view; but as I have no right to judge until I shall see the *finale*, I shall suspend my conclusion, and I hope to be satisfied, that in breaking it, you imparted to your countrymen the *coup d'œil*, enabling them distinctly

to discern, even through the mists of party, the abode of truth.

With veneration, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

*Hon. John Adams,
Quincy.*

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LETTER LVII.

QUINCY, Nov. 29, 1809.

Dear Sir,

I return you the enclosed letter, according to your desire. No eye but mine has seen it, and no copy of it, or any part of it has been taken.

Whatever my son said to you, he said it by guess. He knows nothing of my plan. You need be under no concern. If I should live to make mention again of the gentleman, which is not very probable, I shall be very mild with him.

I could not give an adequate idea of my transactions in Holland without inserting in their place the letters of Dr. Kalkoen. The publication of those, or any other, letters of mine

written thirty years ago, by no means implies that I am of the same opinion now. Many things that I then thought correct may not appear so now, original documents will be scanned by historians.

The inconsistencies you mention are merely imaginary, as might be shewn : but our opinions differ so widely, and upon so many points, that the discussion would require more time than I can possibly spare.

I have received another letter from you, containing a hint from a Junto or a Junta man. Which Junta he belongs to you do not say. You may easily imagine that a Republican would dress up a man of straw to divide the Federalists, or vice versa, a Federalist would evoke a ghost to divide the Republicans. But this is too ridiculous a story for me to write a word more about it.

I am, dear sir,

Your friend and humble servant.

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. Cunningham.

LETTER LVIII.

FITCHBURG, *Dec. 9, 1809.**Dear Sir,*

I am indebted to you for your favour of the 29th ult.

It appears, that you think our opinions as opposite "as the south to the Septentrion." I am not sensible of so much odds, but be the difference what it may, when I gave you my impressions, I was bound in honour to be indifferent whether they would carry one into the southern or northern region of your opinion. I well know that no favour is so ungraciously received as the pure offering of friendship. Aware of this, Shakspeare has, in most of his colloquies where the severity of kindness should be displayed, assigned its performance to the Fool, from whom nothing offends.

You inform me that I need be under no concern about your future treatment of Hamilton. The anxiety I have felt on that subject, has not been on his account. As it respects him, and every other public character, living or dead, I should have no objection to having

the casket of their deserts “unpeg’d upon the house’s top.”

I am Sir, your most obliged friend,

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

LETTER LIX.

FITCHBURG, Dec. 29, 1809.

Dear Sir,

When I wrote to you of the 9th inst. I did not expect that I should again trouble you; nor did I look for an answer. To this hour, I can very truly assure you, that the contents of your letters are unknown to any human being but myself, excepting those to whom they were known before their transmission to me. But believing that you are overleaping the sentiments you used to embrace and inculcate, in the pursuit of some new design, or to gratify a resentment, I wish myself enlarged from your injunctions. And since I have seen and examined the Message of Mr. Madison at the opening of the present session of Congress, and the documents accompanying it, I can hardly per-

suade myself, that my obligations to you are paramount to those which I owe my country.

I will shew you, in a very brief analysis of your letters, wherein their disclosure would subserve the great purpose of overcoming the prejudices against one country, and of the partialities to another, which have already exhausted our treasury, enfeebled us to a condition that we are become the very sport of the nation we would befriend—the contempt of the one we would injure, and which are about to ingulph us in an unjustifiable and a devouring war. The candour which would forbear this censure any longer, is itself censurable.

It appears by your Letters to me in the years 1803 and 1804 that you declared yourself in possession of certain facts concerning Mr. Jefferson which, for the reasons you assigned, you were averse to communicating by Letter—That you encouraged me to arraign, “at the Bar of Reason,” the Administration of Mr. Jefferson, and censured the Federalists for their inactivity. That you very intelligently hinted, that you could verbally supply me with some materials for the manufacture of strictures—

And that you very seriously declared of Mr. Jefferson, that he was under the government of the two most unfriendly passions to the liberties of a people, that can possibly reign in the bosom of a magistrate—"A MEAN THIRST OF POPULARITY, AND AN INORDINATE AMBITION." What, sir, but avariciousness of popularity, and insatiable ambition, have been the causes of all the tyranny with which the world has been cursed? It will farther appear by your Letters, that so recently as September 1808, you passed judgment decidedly against much, nay against the most, of the management during the Jeffersonian dynasty. And it appears that subsequently to the last date, and after you had thrown off your aversion to an appearance on the public stage, you exonerated Mr. Jefferson, directly or virtually, of every allegation which had been preferred against him. Besides these things, the Letters first mentioned contain much anti-democratical doctrine. And your Letter of the 22d June, contains a most unfortunate confession. You therein say, that your "Daughter-in-law, on a particular occasion, exclaimed, "I know sir, that your two sons are very much delighted

that you have taken the subject up”—“This” you add, “I knew as well as she did.” This confession is unfortunate, insomuch as it broadens the ground for the suspicion of an ascendancy of you by your sons, which stood on the public conduct of the eldest of them. It is not absent from me, that you lately told me that your son now with you, knows nothing of your plan, but surely he will not think himself complimented by an assurance, that he is much delighted with what he knows nothing of. Neither his filial affection, nor his confidence in you, can deserve a compliment of this extent.

I agree with Burke, “that no government ever yet perished from any other direct cause than its own weakness.” And I agree with you, where you say, in your “*Defence of the Constitutions of the United States*,”—“It has been the common people, and *not the gentlemen*, who have established simple monarchies all over the world. The common people, *against the gentlemen*, established a simple monarchy in Cæsar at Rome, in the Medici at Florence, and are now in danger of doing the same thing in Holland.” They have done it. And are they

not in danger of doing the same thing in America? An excellent writer you observed in the "Defence," "said, somewhat incautiously, that people will never oppress themselves, or invade their own rights." "This compliment," say you, "if applied to human nature, or to mankind, or to any nation or people in being or in memory, is more than has been merited—If it should be admitted, that a people will not unanimously agree to oppress themselves, it is as much as is ever, and more than is always true." Now sir, with letters of the complexion I have mentioned, and with such concessions, the fullest ever made, of the fickleness of the multitude, added to the peculiar circumstances of the times, I appeal to you as to a Patriot, and demand what shall I do? Since the appearance of the Message, and Documents, I have turned this question over and over in my mind. I have examined every side and each end of it—When patriotism gives me counsel, it is difficult to find enough in my affection for you to dissuade me against its importunity—When I consult the claim of affection, I think on those who have sacrificed their Children for their Country. Are

we more under the calves of John Bull than when George Washington was President, John Adams, Vice-President, and John Jay, Chief Justice? Are we, suffer me with all plainness to ask, are we nearly so much under that calfish influence as when you yourself was President? I build this enquiry on the arguments which you repeatedly and publicly employed, not only to overthrow the prejudice existing against Great Britain, but to shew *that she would not receive our voluntary submission.* Who, yourself excepted, ever went so far as this? Will you contend that what you have said, on this subject, to public bodies which addressed you, and what on the same subject you have said to me, are *imaginary contradictions?* I think it important to the public security, that they should have before them all the means which can enable them to determine whether there is not “an un noble swerving.” Should they perceive that there is, the errors you are disseminating may be prevented from finding root in a too easy credulity, or in the profound respect which has been imbibed for your name. And Manlius will be roused before the city shall

be taken. There are, in your letters, many things of a *jocose*, of a *serious*, and of a very delicate nature, which I have no wish, nor any warrantable cause to let loose from confinement.

But in addition to reasons of a public nature, for wishing enlargement to some of the matter entrusted to my keeping, I have private reasons:—I do not know that I have an opinion on any political subject unsupported by your authority. I remember that in the year 1774 or 5, you made a visit to my Father's. I was then a small boy, but I have as strong a remembrance as if it was but yesterday, that I regarded with particular attention, the bag in which your hair was tied; and that it assisted to heighten my conception of your greatness. The bent of these conceptions I have followed from that time to this, and it would be an endless labour to recite the sentiments, written and oral, of yours, upon which most of my political speculations have been founded. I cannot omit the mention of an instance which strikingly confirms how well you thought I had profited by your instructions:—Entering your room in the year 1804, you accosted me *Hume*, and attribut-

ed to me the pieces which at that time appeared with that signature. I could not permit myself to enjoy the felicity of being supposed by you the writer of those numbers—you then extolled their contents, and pronounced them worthy a deathless meed. It is an inexplicable enigma, that you should have spoken as you did then, and write as you do now. Am I wrong, that I retain the opinions which were common to us both, or you in departing from them? But yet farther the retention by me exposes me to the unpleasant consequences of your disapprobation—this I feel as a cruelty. I cannot now enjoy your smiles without sacrificing my sentiments, and of this fact, of which I presume you are insensible, I will give you an admonitory example:—From an intimation that it would be agreeable to you to have your letter to Dr. Webb published in a Worcester Paper, I caused it to be there printed, with an introduction which I penned in the full flow of esteem. The letter, which you returned me in answer to the one in which I transmitted you the printed letter to Dr. Webb, is the only letter couched in the spirit of a genuine cordiality, which you have

written to me since, by your desire, I criticised your public letters—The admonition from this fact, you may take from one of the charges made against you by your great accuser. But the business with which you tasked me respecting your public letters, had no connexion with your panegyric—it lay altogether in the shades. I knew its performance was difficult, for I had not forgotten the speech of Symmachus to the Imperial Court ; but I expected a generous reception of what you had solicited, though I did not look for such remuneration as Henry IV, made to Sully when, in the transports of zeal for his master's honour, Sully rent in pieces the marriage articles which Henry had shamefully entered into with Henrietta d' Entragues ; and when he intimated that his master was a fool for having signed them. My comments were so evidently disagreeable to you that I discontinued them. In my letter of June 30th, which was the second I addressed to you after I received your enquiry, “ Whether and wherein you had exposed yourself ? ” I proposed to suspend my remarks till I should receive some signification of your wish to have them continued—

the request never was renewed. I did afterwards, however, notice one or two things.— And now that I think of it, I say a word or two about Col. Pickering. In one of your public letters, you gave an account of an interview between yourself and one of the Heads of Departments, at which you attempted to pacify a dislike of your proceedings, which was unexpectedly manifested by a tender of resignation—with begging that none of the Heads of Departments would think of resigning—that you was perfectly satisfied, &c. Now in two or more of your letters to me, you assert or insinuate, that Pickering was unfit on the score of capacity, for Secretary of State, and that fact, you say or insinuate, was known to some few in the nation who had “winnowed him with a rough wind.” Such being your impression, at the time of the interview, was there no impropriety in your answer to the Secretary? I pretend not to know what the talents of Col. Pickering really are, but a certain Report of his, which I could not believe to have been penned by him, if destitute as you had described him, I questioned you about, but you never satisfied me

whether he was assisted in its composition, although you have ascribed to him the production of Washington's Address to Adet. I received your statements concerning him as correct, and answered you accordingly.

I made you a visit in the year 1792 in company with Mr. John Q. Adams. The floor of the room in which the company sat, was covered with a new painted canvass. The figures arrested attention, and it was concluded that the painting represented the street of some ancient city. Assenting with the rest, to this, you remarked, that the city which had such streets was not under the government of Selectmen; from which I drew the inference, that in your opinion, the objects of legislation, even within the limited circle of municipal authority could not be brought to any approach to perfection, without energy and order—How much more is an energetic regulation necessary to the attainment by a nation of all the advantages of civil rule?

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

LETTER LX.

FITCHBURG, Jan. 15, 1810.

Dear Sir,

I am without an answer to my last of the 29th ult. in which I observed, that a confession respecting your sons, made in your letter of the 22d of June, was unlucky, but I reserved for another letter, the principal fact, and the reflections upon it, which give that aspect to the acknowledgment alluded to.

If you will review the letter of the 8th of July, but which you detained in your own hands on account of its virulence, till the 13th of August, and then forwarded to me with directions to return it, you will find the following sentence:—"I should have gone to my grave without writing a word, if the very system of Hamilton, a war with France, had not been revived, and apparently adopted by a majority of New-England. The British faction, and the old tories, appeared to have disciplined the Federalists to a system which appeared to me fundamentally wrong, and I determined to oppose it." By this, sir, it appears most evidently, that instead of coming before the public to

make your defence, you have entered the *arena* of political controversy, with a view to prevent the success of one party, and to make the other predominant. In ordinary cases, we except motives, and answer arguments, but in this case it is material to shew, that you have sacrificed to your passions. This I can shew by your own concessions.

In my answer to the letter from which the sentence above is extracted, I said—"it contained many things which I admired, and many before unknown to me." I might have admired the seven lines of original poetry in which you compressed the plan you are now executing in your public letters. But is there in these lines, the least glimpse of your being actuated in the composition of these letters by a sense of obligation to yourself against any injustice done you by Gen. Hamilton? No, sir, not a shadow of it—your objects in these letters, as you revealed them to me in those sprigs of the Parnassian Mount, (and they appear as if intended to describe your whole design,) are all of another sort—they are slips engrafted on the stock of your hatred of Hamilton, and bear the same natural affinity to

your object in your public writings, as you disclosed in it the above-recited passage from your letter of the 8th of July, as despoiling is allied to the Agrarian Law.

As to what was before unknown to me in the letter last mentioned, it was nearly all so, as is plain from some recapitulations from it in my answer.

The passage recited from your letter of the 8th of July, is the most extraordinary confession of all, and is so intimately connected with the confession in the letter of the 22d of June, and in the letter of Sept. 27th, that they are essentially depending one upon another. The bud which put out in the letter of the 22d of June, dilated in the letter of the 8th of July, and fully expanded in the letter of Sept. 27th—This is the progress to maturity:—

“My sons were very much delighted I had taken the subject up.”

“I should have gone to my grave, without writing a word, if the very system of Hamilton, a war with France, had not been revived and apparently adopted.”

“Poor Democrats, Republicans, and still

poorer Americans, are at the feet of John Bull and his calves ; matters cannot be much longer minced, the truth must out."

Why were your sons delighted that you had taken the subject up ?

When I read the passage recited from the July letter, my attention and astonishment were equally enchain'd ; but as the measures of the Federalists, which appeared to you to have a warlike countenance against *friendly* France ; and which had brought you, according to your letter, from your sequestered abode into the field of controversy, had subsided by an accommodation with England, my alarm abated, and was soon lost in a supposition, that you felt yourself obliged to fill up the outline of your plan as you had presented it to the public, and that you would move slowly on after the winds had ceased, by the impetus given you by the first gusts. According to this outline, the public understand, that your present undertaking is to vindicate yourself against certain aspersions, which you consider unfounded in Gen. Hamilton's letter—but by the declarations made to me in two passages in your letter of July,

your design is very different; and if it is not undeniably true that, under the semblance of a personal vindication, your design is nothing less than to baffle and defeat the measures you once advocated and supported, I may, without fear of contradiction, assert, *that it is to give more power and more extensive adoption, to the prejudices you once reviled and condemned!* Through whose instigation, or by what excitement, is this reverse of conduct? To say it has been effected by a change of circumstances, is too palpably unfounded to be pretended. You do indeed, follow the above recited passage, with some swelling on your own ill treatment, but the personal complaints are evidently used in the letter as if intended for nothing more than to serve you with a convenient apology for your public appearance. If there is not an inconsistency here, and an inconsistency at the expense of what you ought most to value, there is a mystery in great management which I know as little how to solve, as a boor to explain a problem in Euclid. What has the prevalency of any system recommended by Gen. Hamilton to do with proving your pre-

miership in the negotiations of 1783 ? To give this proof, is the publicly avowed object of your publications in the Patriot.

Suffer me with seriousness to ask—Whether a war, for which we made great preparation in 1798, against France, and which you have said was actually waged, was not as much in accordance with the system of Hamilton, as the opposition measures of last winter, to which you have alluded, could have been ? Most assuredly it was. And what part did you take in 1798 ? Gen. Hamilton himself said in your praise, that you “took upon the occasion, a manly and courageous lead—that you did all in your power to rouse the pride of the nation—to inspire it with a just sense of the injuries and outrages which it had experienced, and to dispose it to a firm and magnanimous resistance ; and that your efforts contributed materially to the end.” You may possibly object that this does not come up to the full merit of your exertions, but you will not say that it outmeasures them.

In an answer to the address of the young men of New-York, dated May 1798, you say :—“I assure you, my young friends, that the satis-

tion with my conduct which has been expressed by the rising generation, has been one of the highest gratifications I ever received, because I can sincerely say, that their happiness, and that of their posterity, more than my own, or that of my cotemporaries, has been the object of the studies and labours of my life."—The same sentiment, with more expansion, you expressed on several occasions. Enlivening the courage of the young men of Boston with encomiums on the public spirit of their fathers, you exclaim,—"To arms! my young friends, to arms!"—And in another answer to an address, you emulated a few examples in history of proud and generous patriotism, and wished the opposers of the measures then in operation, safely within the lines of the enemy. Had you been in your last hour, the young men of New-York standing around you, you could not have addressed them with more solemnity, nor apparently, with higher satisfaction in the consciousness of your sincerity. And what were "the studies and labours of your life," which you then considered so important to the happiness of future generations? Pray, sir, con-

sider that an **Omar**, nor oblivion are yet your friends.

I entreat you now, to turn your eye to one line of the summary given of your character by Hamilton in the 13th page of his letter—and to a trait in the last paragraph of the 19th page, and then tell me with your hand on your heart, whether any thing, save a deep-rooted antipathy to Hamilton, Pickering, &c.—or a partiality to some others, the natural consequence of that antipathy, and equally unwarrantable, can account for your opposite appearance, on the same question, in the years 1798 and 1810 ? Certainly the same question in respect to the disposition towards us of England ; and the same with regard to France, with the single exception, that England is in the same transgression. Tell me, too, whether this opposition will not sink your political character—your rectitude, to irredeemable perdition, as certainly so, as the giving way, in his old age, to his resentments against Demosthenes, and his favouring the views of the enemy, Nicanor, in disregard of the counsel of Dercyllus, sunk Phocion, sur-named for his early devotion to his country, the

good? Tell me, too, whether as a friend to the rights and liberties of my country, I am not bound to exhibit, that the causes of this opposition are such as ought to reduce an estimation of your professions of democratic republicanism, to a level with the estimation, long since made, of certain professions of Rolla and Clovis, made to facilitate the government of those to whom they were addressed?

No man is more deeply penetrated with a sense of the inviolability of confidential trusts. But were I to make oath to keep inviolate such a trust, conditional to its reception, and to make it with as much solemnity as Atrides swore that he surrendered the beautiful Briseis untouched to Achilles, and should make it without any sort of reservation, a reservation would yet exist in the duty, social and relative, which every man and every citizen is bound by solemn obligations to respect. A promise nor an oath of secrecy, is not to be construed to extend to the transgression of the duty we are under from the instant of our birth, and of which there is never an intermission—it is a contradiction in

terms, that a man can bind himself to do what he is bound not to perform.

I have felt for you as a neighbourhood feel towards one brought up amongst them, whose actions now and then, incur suspicions, but which suspicions die away without reviving, until some act less equivocal than any preceding, or until some extraordinary occurrence shall awaken reflection, and put eyes into it, that it can see what before passed almost unobserved. In the letter from which I have extracted, you observed, that the portrait of Washington ought not to shove aside the portraits of John Hancock and Samuel Adams, in Fanueil Hall. Now, to say nothing of Samuel Adams, what was John Hancock ? I will tell you what you yourself once said of him. In the afternoon of a day in the summer of 1791, some conversation respecting him led Mrs. Adams to remark, that he was born near your residence—you turned yourself towards your front door, and pointing to a spot in view, you laughingly exclaimed, “Yes ! there’s the place where the great Governor Hancock was born.” Then, composing your countenance, and rolling your eye, you went on with these exclama-

tions—"John Hancock! A man without head and without heart—the mere shadow of a man, and yet a Governor of old Massachusetts!" Pausing a moment you breathed a sigh, which sorrowed, as plainly as a sigh could sorrow, for poor Massachusetts.

This, I expect, is the last letter I shall write you. You have had ample time to make objections to a public use of some parts of your letters, had you been disposed to make them. I shall, therefore, construct your assent to such an use from your silence, and shall so dispose of your letters as a sense of public duty shall dictate.

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

—

LETTER LXI.

QUINCY, Jan. 16, 1810.

Dear Sir,

I have received your three last letters. The correspondence and conversations which have passed between us have been under

the confidential seal of secrecy and friendship. Any violation of it will be a breach of honour and of plighted faith. I shall never release you from it, if it were in my power; but it is not. After all the permission that I could give, your conscience ought to restrain you. I could as well release you from your obligations of obedience to the Decalogue.

I hope you will consider, before you plunge yourself into an abyss, which the melancholy and disturbed state of mind you appear to be in seems to render you at this time incapable of perceiving before you.

In hopes you will soon be more calm, I am
Your well wisher,

JOHN ADAMS.

Mr. William Cunningham, Jr.



LETTER LXII.

FITCHBURG, Jan. 28, 1810.

Dear Sir,

I have received your favour of the 16th inst. I shall be scrupulously cautious against bringing myself under reproaches of my

conscience, and of giving any just occasion for the forfeiture of the esteem of those whose approbation, next to the consciousness of a good intention, is the most precious of all earthly consolations.

Much contained in our correspondence, and much more in our conversations, will not be extorted from me by any circumstances, out of yourself, while you live—some parts of it can never be divulged to any others than the implicated characters—perhaps never to them, nor is my resolution to divulge any part of either, yet decisively taken.

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Hon. John Adams.

Quincy.

—

LETTER LXIII.

FITCHBURG, Jan. 21, 1812.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed is a communication for the Palladium. I shall delay forwarding it to the printers for a few days, that if it contains any

thing unwarranted by your letters to and conversations with me, you may point out wherein.

I have been cruelly and unjustly treated by you—(He that is

“In rebellion with himself will have
All that are his so too.”)

I have, nevertheless, in all that I have done, been sparing—Review your letter to me of the 16th of January 1810, in connection with the letters to which it was an answer, and say, what must be the opinion of an impartial world on that answer? It needs but a little knowledge of the human heart, and but a little acquaintance with history, to make the inferences.

I am, &c.

W_M. CUNNINGHAM, J_R.

Hon. John Adams.

ERRATA.

Page 19, line 2 from the top, insert *female* before *virtue*.
Page 28, line 12 from the bottom, insert *rational* before *federalism*.
Page 40, line 8 from the bottom, for *where* read *whence*.
Page 64, line 10 from the bottom, for *editors* read *electors*.
Page 69, line 11 from the bottom, for *has* read *have*.
Letter XXV, page 79, date should be *Feb. 11*.
Page 81, line 9 from the top, for *Tories'* read *Frie's*.
Same page, bottom line, for *Phæcion* read *Phocion*.
Page 112, line 5, for *ore* read *one*.
Page 123, line 12 from the bottom, for "a project of" read "the project of a."
Page 150, line 3 from the top, for *from* before *the* read *for*.
Page 162, line 10 from the top, for *ever* read *never*.
Page 194 line 8 from the top, for *one* read *me*.

A

REVIEW

OF THE

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN THE

HON. JOHN ADAMS,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

AND THE LATE

WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM, ESQ.

BEGINNING IN 1803, AND ENDING IN 1812.

BY TIMOTHY PICKERING.

SECOND EDITION.

—♦♦♦♦—

SALEM:

PUBLISHED BY CUSHING AND APPLETON.

:::::::

1824.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO WIT:

District Clerk's Office.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the seventh day of May, A. D. 1824, and in the 48th year of the Independence of the United States of America, Cushing and Appleton, of the said district, have deposited in this office, the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

“A Review of the Correspondence between the Hon. John Adams, late President of the United States, and the late William Cunningham, Esq. beginning in 1803, and ending in 1812. By Timothy Pickering.”

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled “An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;” and also to an act, entitled “An Act, supplementary to an act, entitled “An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints.”

JOHN W. DAVIS,
Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.

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☞ The recurrence of Mr. Adams to the same topics, in various parts of his Correspondence, and the arrangements of the principal subjects in this Review, have occasioned some repetitions of the same facts and remarks.

INTRODUCTION.

A PAMPHLET of more than two hundred pages has appeared, under the title of "CORRESPONDENCE between the Hon. John Adams, late President of the United States, and the late William Cunningham, Esq. beginning in 1803, and ending in 1812."

A family connexion appears to have had some influence to induce Mr. Adams to unbosom himself to Mr. Cunningham. In one of his letters he tells us that Cunningham's grandmother was the beloved sister of his mother. Two objects were obtained by Mr. Adams's disclosures: He gratified the keen appetite of his friend for secret history; and eased his own mind, by giving vent to his spleen against some public men whom he hated.

Mr. Adams, roused at length by his subject, and stimulated by the constant flatteries of his friend, resolves to write his own history; because, says he, "no human being but myself can do me justice; *and I shall not be believed.* All I can say will be imputed to vanity and self-love." In the progress of this Review, the reader will find these prophetic anticipations verified. He will see, from the numerous aberrations of Mr. Adams, that his statements are not entitled to belief; while every page is characterized by his vanity and self-love.

In performing the task which Mr. Adams has imposed on me, I shall be obliged to take a pretty extensive view of his character; and present some features in the characters of others whom he has introduced into his letters. In these he has been pleased to give me a conspicuous place, making me a standing theme of reproach. But although so many of his shafts have been levelled at me, from his full quiver he has shot many at others; especially at one who, by way of eminence, may be justly styled THE FEDERALIST. Federalists generally, perhaps almost universally, were once the friends of Mr. Adams; and they continued such, so long and so far as his public conduct permitted them to support him, consistently with their views of what the public welfare required. The mere abatement of their zeal wounded his pride, excited his resentment, and exposed them to his reproach.

For myself, I determined on a formal vindication; aware, at the same time, of the labour it would cost me, in looking for and

examining numerous documents, written and printed, of many years' standing. Accusations, which a page would comprise, might require a volume to refute. But Mr. Adams's calumnies are spread over many pages, and will bring into view a variety of topics for reflection.

The letters of Mr. Adams present a tissue of misrepresentations, perverse constructions, and unfounded assertions. The latter, in any other case, I might designate by a harsher term. While under the influence of his passions strongly agitated (and a little excitement, like a small match to a mass of gunpowder, is sufficient to produce an explosion) he may not be perfectly qualified to distinguish between truth and falsehood. *Suspicions*, the offspring of a proud and jealous mind, are substituted for *facts*; and on these chimeras he rests confident assertions. But heedless precipitation is itself criminal; and its consequences may be as injurious to the party accused, as deliberate falsehood.

By many persons, forgetting the latter years of his life, and thinking only of his revolutionary services, Mr. Adams is hailed as "great and good," and is now familiarly designated by the flattering title of "the venerable sage of Quincy." I am as ready as any man to acknowledge—I have, not long since, before a very numerous assembly, acknowledged—Mr. Adams's merit in contributing largely to the vindication of the rights of the Colonies, and in effecting the independence of the United States: it was an act of justice, which I feel no disposition to retract. But "great men are not always wise;" and some, after many good deeds, commit inexcusable faults; and, whether these injuriously affect one's country, or individual citizens, they ought to be exposed; for the public welfare, in one case; and, in the other, to rescue individuals from the effects of undeserved reproach.

In analyzing the "Correspondence," and some other letters of Mr. Adams written at the same period, it will be seen with what facility, and how little truth, he could represent facts and occurrences concerning persons who were the objects of his hatred. This may serve to put on their guard readers of all his productions, whether already written, or which may hereafter appear, during his life, or after his death. Of the latter, I doubt not he has made ample preparation. The present examination will demonstrate, that when the interest of himself or of any member of his family is involved, or his vanity and ambition have room to operate, or meet with checks and obstacles, little reliance can be placed on his statements. If ingenuity or charity can find an apology for him—and that will be a bad one—it will be, that his selfish and ungoverned passions blind him.

Mr. Adams's virulent reproaches of federalists, of Hamilton and of me in particular, seem to have been written when he was tortured with the keen feelings of disappointed ambition (feelings which, after the lapse of eight years, since he failed of a re-elec-

tion to the presidency, recurred in full force)—an ambition which could bear no opposition, or even lukewarmness, in regard to the means of gratifying it. He has himself described this passion in language that would not have occurred to any man who had not felt it in its utmost violence. “The desire of the esteem of others,” says he, “is as real a want of nature, as hunger—and the neglect “and contempt of the world, as severe a pain as the gout or the stone.”*

Of Mr. Jefferson I should have said nothing beyond what appeared in Mr. Adams’s own writings; and that, merely to contrast his different representations, to show their inconsistency, and that his course of conduct was directed exclusively by his views of existing interests of himself and family. But Mr. Jefferson’s letter to Mr. Adams, of October 12, 1823, published in the Boston Patriot in December, and thence introduced into other papers to be spread through the Union (for every letter from the pens of these two gentlemen is eagerly circulated in the public prints) appeared to me calculated to lead the readers into a misconception of their characters, and of the relations in which they stand towards each other. That letter, therefore, with its connexions, will demand some notice.

What is history? A mere detail of events may engage curiosity; but it is the characters of the actors which especially interest the reader; and the exhibition of their actions, whether these be good or bad, which furnishes useful lessons of instruction. Mr. Adams and Mr. Jefferson were conspicuous actors in the period of our revolution, and received applause. Future historians will investigate their characters, and by their actions regulate the award of censure and of praise, for the information and warning of those who shall live after them. But, seeing they have at one time done deeds worthy of remembrance, why drag their faults and failings before the eyes of their countrymen, many of whom, without inquiry, seem now inclined to forget and forgive? Let a celebrated ancient give the answer:—“In this, I apprehend, consists the chief part of “the historian’s duty: It is his, to rejudge the conduct of men, “that generous actions may be snatched from oblivion, and the “authors of pernicious counsels, and the perpetrators of evil deeds, “may see, beforehand, the infamy that awaits them at the tribu-“nal of posterity.”† The occasion calls on me to make some contributions for this object. Hence this Review will be extended, and assume, in some degree, the shape of historical memoirs. With respect to Mr. Adams, the truths I state may, without much difficulty, gain admittance; for, by his own account, he has few

* Discourses on Davila, No. 4; ascribed to Mr. Adams as the author.

† Tacitus, Annals, iii. Murphy’s translation. These ideas are compressed in the original: *Præcipuum munus annalium reor, ne virtutes sileantur, utque pravis dictis factisque ex posteritate et infamia metus sit.*

friends among those denominated federalists; and still fewer among his old enemies, the adherents of Mr. Jefferson.*

Of all the persons vilified and reproached by Mr. Adams, Mr. Jefferson is the only one to whom he appears to have been solicitous to make reparation. But was he the only one entitled to it? Do his eulogists think nothing due to the memories of Hamilton and Ames and other departed federalists, and to their surviving compatriots, who have been calumniated by the Adams family? Are their names to be blotted from history, or remembered only to be associated with infamy? The "Correspondence" demands a full examination. As far as present circumstances require, I will examine it; and make an essay to do justice to the parties whose names Mr. Adams has introduced, and made the subjects of his reproaches or of his praise. Of the latter, the number is small indeed; principally himself—his son J. Q. Adams—his son-in-law Col. William S. Smith deceased, and Elbridge Gerry, also deceased.

A just defence of myself and others, the subjects of Mr. Adams's bitter calumnies, compels me to expose his numerous aberrations, and to state some necessary truths. Truth is the soul of history. To ascertain some facts, my testimony may be useful. The value of that testimony will depend on the estimate formed of my character by my contemporaries. On that footing I am willing it should rest.

* In March, 1809, a short time prior to the election of governor and senators of Massachusetts, two democrats of Northampton addressed a flattering letter to Mr. Adams, requesting him to express his opinion respecting the present circumstances of the nation, with regard to foreign powers and domestic parties. On the 20th of that month, Mr. Adams sends an answer, in which he gives a dialogue, which he says passed in Holland, in 1784, between himself and Deodati, minister of the elector of Saxony. Deodati overwhelms him with compliments; ascribing to him the glory of having made his countrymen and their government republican; that he had made his country very celebrated; that he had made it independent; that he had made an astonishing treaty with Holland, and a marvellous peace with England, and made her acknowledge our independence. Mr. Adams tells Deodati, that he is too polite; that he had no pretensions to have performed all those great achievements; that he had acted a part in some of those affairs. Deodati then predicts, that his fate would be the same with all the ancient republicans, Aristides, Phocion, Miltiades, Scipio, &c. &c. To which Mr. Adams answers, "I believe it." Deodati goes on: "You will experience in "gratitude, injustice:"—"You will be ill-treated, hated, despised, persecuted." Mr. Adams answers, "I have no doubt of all that: it is in the ordinary nature and "course of things." Mr. Adams then proceeds to say, that a curious coalition of French and English emissaries, with Federal and Republican Libellers, had so completely fulfilled the prophecy of Deodati, and his own forebodings—so totally destroyed his reputation by their calumnies—that he had then neither power nor influence to do any thing for his country. The last paragraph of his letter is particularly characteristic, and is in these words:

"I always consider the whole nation as my children; but they have almost all "proved undutiful to me. You two gentlemen are almost the only ones, out of my "own house, who have for a long time, and I thank you for it, expressed a filial "affection for

JOHN ADAMS."

By introducing a few sentences in Latin, I do not desire to impose on the reader an idea of literature, to which I make no pretensions; but when a passage suited to my subject occasionally falls in my way, I take the liberty to use it. All I claim to possess is, some portion of common sense, and some force in argument; and knowledge enough of my mother tongue, to exhibit facts, reasonings and reflections, in a plain and perspicuous style, so that my meaning can be easily understood. To scurrilities I have been subjected through a large portion of my life: these I have despised: but, when assailed in any point of morals, I have offered a vindication, or have caused the libellers to be prosecuted. This was a duty which I owed, not to myself only, but to the great number of respectable men who have honoured me with their friendship. Some of these have been pleased to say, that I owed it to my country, in whose service so large a portion of my life has been employed. The first suit was against one Dr. Reynolds, of Philadelphia. The case was clear, to the satisfaction of the supreme court; and so the cause was committed to the jury. Eleven of these were agreed; but one, a democrat, persevered in withholding his assent; and the jury was dismissed. On the second trial, there were two democrats on the jury—and a verdict not obtained. Reynolds's counsel then observed to mine, that his client was "a poor devil," without property; and that if I should persevere, and finally obtain a verdict for damages, it would not operate as a punishment on the libeller; but if I would drop the suit, he would make him muster money enough to pay the costs. The suit was dropped. One Baptiste Irvine, editor of a paper in Baltimore, published a libel against me. I brought an action against him: he published a recantation, and I forgave him. Libelled once in a newspaper in my native town, the printer was indicted, convicted, fined and imprisoned. I was then absent, attending a session in congress. Libelled once more in my native county, the libeller was prosecuted. He made his confession, which was entered on the records of the court; and I forgave him. The last prosecution was of a printer in New-Hampshire. He also humbled himself—published his recantation—and was forgiven.

Doubtless there were many other libellous publications, which never came to my knowledge.

Once I was hung in effigy in the Northern Liberties of Philadelphia, on a gallows fifty feet high; and a printed notice of the time was sent to me, then in congress at Washington. This was during the existence of president Jefferson's glorious, indefinite embargo; of which I had taken the liberty to say, *that I did not like it*. On receiving the notice, the first thought that occurred to me was, that the effigy of one of the greatest and best men the United States ever knew, John Jay, had been exhibited, a public spectacle, in the same manner, and I believe in the same place; and, so associated, I felt myself honoured by the elevation.

I close these introductory observations with one remark on the principal subject of this Review—

JOHN ADAMS.

No man, perhaps, has ever suffered more from disappointed ambition and mortified vanity, than Mr. Adams; for in no man, I believe, were those passions ever more highly sublimated. At the first organization of the general government, he complained (so it has been, and I doubt not truly, stated) because the votes of the electors were not unanimous for him as well as for Washington.* At that time (some readers may need to be informed) before the constitution was *altered*, in the first term of Mr. Jefferson's presidency (specially, perhaps, for his accommodation, prior to another election) the candidates for the offices of president and vice-president were not respectively designated in the electoral votes; but he who had the greatest number, if a majority of the whole, was to be the president; and he who had the next greatest number was to be the vice-president: and in case more than one had such majority, and an equal number of votes, then the house of representatives, voting by states (that is, the representation from each state having one vote) were immediately to choose, by ballot, one of them for president. Under this provision of the constitution, Mr. Adams might hope, if the votes for him and Washington had been equal (and from his complaint that they were not, it is pretty evident that he expected it) to have obtained the preference, by the choice of the house; leaving to Washington the honour of being his "lieutenant." At any rate, he would have contemplated the fact with great complacency, that the people, acting by their electors, held him in equal honour with Washington. From his education as a lawyer, and his learned investigations of what concerned civil rule, he probably thought himself entitled to a preference. But Mr. Adams has admitted and repeated a **TRUTH, too well known**, that "KNOWLEDGE is by no means necessarily connected with WISDOM OR VIRTUE."†

* Washington had all the votes—69; Adams 34.

† Defence of the American Constitutions of Government, vol. i. letter 29

REVIEW.

SECTION 1.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

THE first letter in the "Correspondence" is from Mr. Adams, dated November 23, 1803, near three years after his rival, Mr. Jefferson, had intercepted him in his second march towards the president's chair. In this letter, Mr. Adams acknowledges the receipt of an oration of Cunningham's, and of a "brochure,"* in which this friend ascribes to Mr. Jefferson the authorship of a pamphlet entitled "Thoughts on Government, in a letter from a gentleman to his 'friend.'" Mr. Adams says he was himself the author, and that it had been published with his name; but, from the quotation of his correspondent, "suspects that some rascal had reprinted it, and imputed it to the name of Mr. Jefferson."

In his next letter, dated January 16, 1804, Mr. Adams returns to Cunningham a newspaper, in which, with a poignant sneer, he says, "My poor 'Thoughts on Government' are wickedly and libellously imputed to 'the greatest man in America!'"—"libellously," because (such appears to be the obvious implication) his own views of government were, probably, so different from Mr. Jefferson's theories. In the same letter, Mr. Adams, in replying to Cunningham's request, to be furnished with information concerning Jefferson, communicates the sentiments I shall presently introduce.

Mr. Jefferson, in his letter of October 12, 1823, acknowledges the receipt of one from Mr. Adams, dated September 18, which was a few days after his Correspondence with Cunningham had been published in Boston. This letter, no doubt, was written to apologize to Mr. Jefferson for the pointed reproaches he had uttered against him, in his confidential letters to Cunningham. On the 12th of the next month, Mr. Jefferson writes a consolatory answer to Mr. Adams, assuring him of his "unabated and constant attachment, friendship and respect." But Jefferson had not then seen the Correspondence. "I had for some time," says he, "observed,

* A pamphlet.

“in the public papers, dark hints and mysterious innuendoes of a correspondence of yours with a friend to whom you had opened your bosom without reserve, and which was to be made public by that friend or his representative; and now it is said to be actually published. It has not yet reached us, but extracts have been given, and such as seemed most likely to draw a curtain of separation between you and myself.” Mr. Jefferson then exclaims with indignation against the author of this outrage on private correspondence. This indignation is doubtless the echo of Mr. Adams’s expression of resentment against Cunningham’s son, the publisher of the Correspondence. But Mr. Adams, in his apologetical letter, did not tell Mr. Jefferson, that, although the present publication was “an outrage on private correspondence,” yet it was, in fact, only an *anticipation* of a year or two—perhaps of a few months only—of the publication of the same correspondence, with his (Adams’s) permission: for the injunction of secrecy was limited to his own life. His words are, “I shall insist that whatever I write to you upon the subject shall be confidential *as long as I live.*”* It is true, the subject here directly referred to, was his removing me from office; but his details on that act, and his libels on my character, pervade the whole correspondence. Besides, why should Cunningham, the publisher, be more tender of Mr. Jefferson’s character than of mine? The latter was not less dear to me, my family and friends, than his to his family and adherents; and the humble talents I possessed were for as many years devoted to the service of my country: whether as faithfully, I am willing to submit to Mr. Jefferson’s own decision.

On the 10th of January, 1804, Cunningham informs Mr. Adams, that “he had for some time been collecting materials to present the public with a full view of the character and conduct of Mr. Jefferson;” and asks Mr. Adams to furnish him with “some particulars—interesting incidents in Mr. Jefferson’s career;” at the same time telling him, that he had been informed “that such a work was preparing by Mr. Coleman of New-York, under the eye of Hamilton,” which might induce him to relinquish it. In his answer of the 16th of the same month, Mr. Adams says, “I would not advise you to relinquish the project you have in hand, because another has the same. If the two persons you name are engaged in such a work, you may depend upon it no good will come of it.” Why? Mr. Adams subjoins the reason: “There will be so many little passions and weak prejudices, so little candour and sincerity in it, that the dullest reader will see through it.” That is: Hamilton has always been Jefferson’s opponent and enemy; and whatever he says to Jefferson’s disadvantage will be ascribed to his resentments, and will not be believed; whereas, whatever you shall state, as an impartial observer, will stick:—*hærebit lateri lethalis arundo.*†

* Letter, Nov. 7, 1803.

† The fatal shaft will fasten in his side.

Then, in compliance with Cunningham's request for information concerning Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Adams freely makes the following contribution: "He [Jefferson] always professed great friendship for me, even when, as it now appears, he was countenancing Freneau, Bache, Duane and Callender."—"Anecdotes from my memory would certainly be known. There are some there, known only to him and me; but they would not be believed, or at least they would be said not to be believed, and would be imputed to envy, revenge, or vanity. I wish him no ill. I envy him not. *I shudder at the calamities which I fear his conduct is preparing for his country; from a MEAN THIRST OF POPULARITY, AN INORDINATE AMBITION, and a WANT OF SINCERITY.*" In this paragraph there is a clear implication, that some of the anecdotes which he could recite would present such ill-favoured features of Jefferson, and such fair ones of himself, that they would be imputed, by Mr. Jefferson's friends, to envy, revenge, or vanity.

In the same letter of January 10th, Cunningham says, "I wish to discover every areanum that would be of use to develop the true character of the Salt-Mountain Philosopher. This mountain has increased the wonders of the world to eight; and if Mr. Jefferson would sink a tomb in a part of it for himself, it might, better than being a mummy, preserve his body and memory through succeeding ages." This pointed ridicule of his old and nearly half-century friend, Mr. Adams doubtless enjoyed: certainly it received no rebuke.

If the "venerable and illustrious sages" of Monticello and Montezillo* are ever to be reconciled, and confer and receive mutual forgiveness, there is no time to be lost. The latter, being eighty-eight years old, and "now trembling on the verge of the grave," and the former, an "octogenarian," waiting impatiently "for the friendly hand of death to rid him at once of all his heavy hours."

Mr. Jefferson, in his letter to Mr. Adams, is pleased to suggest, that whatever alienation between them had ever taken place, was to be ascribed to tale-bearers; "filling our ears," says he, "with malignant falsehoods; by dressing up hideous phantoms of their own creation, presenting them to you under my name, to me under yours, and endeavouring to instil into our minds things concerning each other, the most destitute of truth." But who has not heard of the libels on president Adams (not omitting Washington) in the

* It has been the practice, in European states, for gentlemen to give particular names to their *villas*, or seats of residence in the country. This has been imitated in America: and in Virginia, and other states where there are not divisions of territory smaller than counties, it may have been found convenient. But in New-England, where counties are divided into small townships, and each distinguished by a *legal and well known name*, to give other names to small spots of a few acres, or to a farm, within a township, is preposterous, and worse than useless. Yet Mr. Adams has (to use a word of Mr. Jefferson's) *belittled* himself, by lately giving to the place of his residence in Quincy (a post-town too) the name of Montezillo—Little-Mount. Whether this was the effect of vanity, or a humble imitation of his friend elevated on the top of Monticello, I do not undertake to decide.

pamphlet called "The Prospect before Us," written by Callender, under the countenance, patronage and pay of Mr. Jefferson ? of which libels Callender was convicted by a jury at Richmond ; for which he was fined and imprisoned, and for which he received (as he had a good right to expect) president Jefferson's pardon.* The patronage and pay were evidenced by two letters from Jefferson to Callender, which, after they had quarrelled, Callender put into the hands of Augustine Davis, Esq. of Richmond. From Davis they went into the hands of a very respectable citizen of Virginia, from whom I received them. Both were in Mr. Jefferson's own hand-writing, to me perfectly well known. Even the hand-writing of Davis, on the backs of the letters, noting his receipt of them from Callender, was known to me, in consequence of an official correspondence, of more than three years, when Davis was the postmaster in Richmond, and I postmaster general.

Extract of a letter, dated Monticello, Sept. 6, '99, from Thomas Jefferson to Mr. Callender.

"SIR,—By a want of arrangement in a neighbouring post-office during the absence of the post-master, my letters and papers for two posts back were detained. I suppose it was owing to this that your letter tho' dated Aug. 10, did not get to my hand till the last day of the month, since which this is the first day I can through the post-office acknowledge the receipt of it. mr. Jefferson † happens to be here and directs his agent to call on you with this & pay you 50 dollars, on account of the book you are about to publish. when it shall be out be so good as to send me 2 or 3 copies, & the rest only when I shall ask for them."

The next paragraph has no relation to "the book;" and the letter concludes with these words :

"with every wish for your welfare, I am,
with great regard, Sir,
your most obedt. servt.

" Mr. Callender"

TH : JEFFERSON."

at the foot of the second page.

The other letter is dated Monticello, October 6, '99. The first line acknowledges the receipt of a letter from Callender of Sept. 29, and concludes with these words :

"I thank you for the *proof sheets* you enclosed me: such papers cannot fail to produce the best effect. they inform the thinking part of the nation; and these again supported by the tax gatherers as their vouchers set the people to rights. you will know from whom this comes without a signature: the omission of which has been rendered almost habitual with me by the curiosity of the post-offices. indeed a period is now approaching during which I shall discontinue writing letters as much as possible, knowing that every snare will be used to get hold of what may be perverted in the eyes of the public.

This is addressed to

Adieu."

"Mr. James Thompson Callender,
Richmond."‡

* See the Appendix, A, for some of the libellous passages in Callender's book.

† George Jefferson, nephew to Thomas Jefferson.

‡ Perhaps the reader will notice some singularities in the above extracts from Mr. Jefferson's letters: he writes *acknolege* for *acknowledge*, and begins his sen-

And on the back of each letter were these words, in the handwriting of Mr. Davis :

“ Given by M. Callender to Aug. Davis.”

There can be no room for an apology for Mr. Jefferson, in paying “ fifty dollars on account of the book,” on the ground that he might not know its contents; for by the second letter it appears that Callender sent him the proof sheets, and that he approved of their contents; “ such papers,” says he, “ cannot fail to produce “ the best effect :” that is, Callender’s book, “ The Prospect before “ Us,” by its slanders on Washington and Adams, and on the whole federal party, would poison the minds of many well-intentioned people, inflame the passions of the democrats, and, by the aid of the whiskey and other internal taxes (always disagreeable to the *multitude*) thin the federal ranks, give victory at the pending election to democracy, and to Mr. Jefferson the long contemplated object of his “ inordinate ambition,” the presidency of the United States.

This whole *Callender affair*, although no trial in our courts was of more notoriety, Mr. Adams has been willing to forget, since his son, John Quincy Adams, in 1807, fully enlisted himself under the banners of president Jefferson. Callender was convicted under what has been called the *sedition law*; a law enacted in Mr. Adams’s presidency, and for its duration limited to that term. One of its objects—for it embraced other subjects—was to protect *him* from the torrents of calumny pouring upon him from all the streams of democracy. It was a law more abused than understood. While it provided for the punishment of *slanderers*—who are always *liars* (such being the import of the word)—it gave protection to honest, *truth-telling* men, in criminal prosecutions, for alleged libels on the president of the United States; by authorizing them to give in evidence the truth of the facts alleged, for their justification.

In his letter, No. X, dated September 27, 1808, Mr. Adams enumerates various acts of Mr. Jefferson’s administration, which he reprobates; as the repeal of the judiciary law, which Mr. Adams says he “ always believed to be a violation of the constitution;” “ the repeal of the taxes,” so necessary to provide defences against foreign dangers, and to diminish the national debt; and “ the removals of so many of the best men, and the appointments of so many of the worst.”

Even legislative acts, in Mr. Jefferson’s administration, may be ascribed to him: for he had acquired such an astonishing ascendancy with his party (though it would puzzle any impartial inquirer to find a reason for it) that the manifestation of his wishes was sufficient powerfully to influence, if not to determine, the passing of a law. And this gentleman has been spending his last breath, and

tences (excepting the first word in a paragraph) with *small* instead of *capital* letters. It is his fashion in all his manuscripts that have fallen under my observation.

some of the remaining rays of his glimmering lamp, in attempting to destroy the independence of the judiciary—our surest defence against tyranny—by depriving the judges of the only safe tenure of their office, “during good behaviour;” and rendering them, at short periods, absolutely dependent on the executive for reappointment; and, thenceforward, his degraded, miserable, corrupt tools. Were this pernicious project to obtain, we should no longer be governed by *certain laws*, but by the *varying passions of our rulers*. Had this been our judiciary system when Mr. Jefferson was president, he would have hurled from the bench chief justice Marshall, because he did not hang Aaron Burr; although judging with the wisdom and purity of Hale, and the integrity, ability and firmness of Holt.

It is in his letter of July 2, 1822, to lieutenant-governor Barry of Kentucky, that we have seen broached these dangerous ideas. It is a letter which ought to be preserved, as a characteristic memorial of a personage so much celebrated as Mr. Jefferson.* The supreme court of the United States, with the independence essential to a due administration of justice, had given some decisions adverse to the pretensions and acts of certain individual states—to restrain them within the limits of the constitution, of which that court is the rightful interpreter: and if the national legislature, or the legislatures of individual states, overleap its boundaries, that court is the only constitutional power which can bring them back. Yet this is the power which Mr. Jefferson would destroy. “Let,” says he, “the future appointment of judges be for four or six years, and re-newable by the president and senate:”—that is, at the pleasure of one man, the president, who would or would not re-nominate the judges, according to their decisions on questions affecting himself, his friends, his party, his caprice, or his visionary notions; and thus destroy the only power whose acts can be relied on—in the highest degree to which any human institution can be entitled to confidence—as most uniformly regulated by REASON.

It deserves notice, that when Mr. Jefferson wrote his letter to lieut. governor Barry, of the seven judges then on the bench of the supreme court, five had received their appointments from Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison, from their own party. The judges Marshall and Washington received their appointments from Mr. Adams, in his better days—when he was himself a federalist. Yet these democratic judges, according to Mr. Jefferson, were, by their judicial decisions, on solemn argument, violating the constitution, and annihilating state rights! No; the obvious solution of their proceedings is this: Feeling their independence of party, and, like all other men when not under the bias of personal interest, disposed to do justice, and knowing that their reputation and future fame—to which none are indifferent—will rest on the *purity* as well as the

* It will be found in the Appendix, B.

ability of their decisions, they will, by their enlightened and impartial adjudications, satisfy their consciences, enjoy a present reward in the approbation of their fellow citizens, and transmit their names with honour to posterity. This is the Power, and the Only Power, which can present a check to the national legislature, whenever its acts shall transcend the limits of the constitution; which was intended to bridle the curvetings of congress, as well as the floundering of state legislatures; assemblies which, like individual rulers, feeling Power, may sometimes forget Right. This is the Power which may decide, in the last resort, the important question now agitated, with great zeal and ability, in the house of representatives, on the making of roads and canals, by the authority of the general government; a measure warmly advocated by some, and as warmly opposed by others, of that national assembly. Should it be enacted, any citizen, whose property shall be touched by the national road or canal, by instituting an action against the national agent, may bring the question before the supreme court; and if that court pronounces the act unconstitutional, that power which holds the purse and the sword—the power so much dreaded, in anticipation, by Patrick Henry and some other distinguished citizens—must stop: for I am not willing to believe that congress, disregarding the court's decision, would by physical force carry the act into execution; but would resort to the mode prescribed by the constitution, for obtaining, by its amendment, the desired power. But it is this *moral power* in the supreme court, the power of REASON over brute force, which Mr. Jefferson would destroy. Every four or six years, he would “bring their conduct under revision” of the president and senate; and renew their appointments, or eject them from the bench, as their decisions should quadrate with, or oppose, the views, interests or passions of the president and senate for the time being: and one of the court's decisions, giving offence, might be the denial of the power of congress to make national roads and canals. Yet this is the ORACLE to which one of the able opposers of the existing bill appeals, and by the force of whose name he hopes to influence the opinions of at least some members of the house, to reject the bill: and if one half of the eminence, which, in the gentleman's eloquent eulogy, is ascribed to Mr. Jefferson, were his due, his opinion, in all cases, would be entitled to much respect. “Against this power of the general government, to make internal improvements, by means of roads and canals, under any part of the constitution, Mr. Stevenson said, he would bring the sanction of a high name in the annals of our political history—the authority of a man, whose principles had been as uniformly steadfast as republican, and whose virtues were as pure as his genius was splendid; a man, who had justly been considered as the ‘Apostle of Liberty.’ It was unnecessary to say, that he alluded to Thomas Jefferson.” His message to congress, Dec. 2^d 1806, is then referred to. It is the same

celebrated message in which Mr. Jefferson casts about him to know what to do with the *surpluses* of the public revenue soon to be accumulated in the national treasury ; and suggests the idea of expending them " for the purposes of public education, roads, rivers, " canals, and such other objects of public improvement as it may " be thought proper to add to the constitutional enumeration of " federal powers." Mr. Jefferson adds, " I suppose an amendment " to the constitution, by the consent of the states, necessary ; be- " cause the objects now recommended are not among those enu- " merated in the constitution, and to which it permits the public " moneys to be applied." His immediate successor, however, instead of being perplexed to find objects on which to expend Mr. Jefferson's *surpluses*, was obliged to study to find expedients to supply *deficiencies*, and actually to borrow some millions of dollars.

But to return to the topic of *mutual forgiveness*, of which the two distinguished gentlemen of whom I am speaking appear so anxious to make a public exhibition—What is its character ? The apologetical letter of Mr. Adams would afford some information ; but it is not published, and I presume never will be : *unmutilated*, it would be a curiosity. Did he confess that the sentiments he once entertained and expressed of Mr. Jefferson were erroneous ? that he believed Mr. Jefferson never contemplated nor carried any measures injurious to his country ? that he was not chargeable with a " mean thirst of popularity," nor an " inordinate ambition," nor " a want of sincerity ?" and that he possessed no anecdotes which if made known would be disreputable to Mr. Jefferson ? And will Mr. Jefferson say, that he never countenanced Freneau, Bache, Duane and Callender, in writing and publishing their slanders against Mr. Adams, in order, by diminishing his popularity, to prevent his re-election to the presidency ? Will Mr. Jefferson go one step further, and say, that he did not, when secretary of state, patronise, and in effect set up, the National Gazette, edited by Philip Freneau, a translating clerk* in his office ; the whole tendency of which—and thence we have a right to say its design—was to undermine the administration of Washington, conducted, as it always was, on federal principles? principles to which Mr. Adams was attached, and on the expected adherence to which his single election to the presidency was obtained. Or, the facts being considered as unquestionable, will Mr. Jefferson now admit that he sinned against Washington, and Adams, and the federal system of government, and truth, in the countenance he gave to those licentious libellers of them all ? When these two gentlemen shall make these avowals and confessions, we may, in the exercise of abounding charity, ascribe their mutual forgivings to a temper becoming Christian penitence—*an act not lightly pressing on persons whose accounts are so near being closed.*

* An imperfect translator too, though qualified to edit such a gazette. This unsustained by a sufficient subscription, died an early death.

In reviewing the "Correspondence," the reproaches uttered by Mr. Adams against Mr. Jefferson would, indeed, have found a place, for the necessary purpose of contrasting them with the subsequent expressions of friendship, respect and praise; the latter drawn from him, or rather *volunteered*, in consequence of the new political situation of his son, in Mr. Jefferson's corps. I should not, however, have made a single animadversion on Mr. Jefferson, but for the appearance of his letter of October 12, in exculpation, not of Mr. Adams only, but of himself; apologizing for their mutual heart-burnings and ill will, by ascribing them to a cause, plausible indeed, and wrought up with no little ingenuity, and wanting only truth and fact for its basis. He insinuates, that tale-bearers have produced all the mischief: but he speaks guardedly—"there *might* not be wanting those who wished to make it"—their political opposition—"a personal one, by filling their ears with malignant falsehoods:" and that the "whispers of these people might make them forget what they had known of each other for so many years, and years of so much trial." Then, as an experienced philosopher, he closes the solution of their difference by a remark, just in itself, and proper, if it were applicable to the case of himself and Mr. Adams. "All men," he says, "who have attended to the workings of the human mind, who have seen the false colours under which passion sometimes dresses the actions and motives of others, have seen also those passions, in subsiding with time and reflection, dissipating like mists before the rising sun, and restoring to us the sight of all things in their true shape and colours." Very handsomely spoken indeed. But will Mr. Jefferson say, that the opinion he now entertains of Mr. Adams materially differs from that he entertained from the year 1796 to 1801? If, during that period, dark mists were thrown around Mr. Adams, did not Mr. Jefferson contribute to raise them? If they were *malignant vapours*, were they not generated by the men whom he patronised, and at least one of whom he paid (as we have seen) for that very purpose? Were those men some of the mischievous go-betweens, whose "whispers" made two old friends "forget what they had known of each other for so many years?" Mr. Adams, however, during that period, seems not to have supposed, that those libellers were the agents of Mr. Jefferson. His constant professions of friendship had laid Mr. Adams's suspicions asleep. The discovery of the truth justified his branding Mr. Jefferson with "a want of sincerity."

To use such means to outstrip his competitor, and rise to the supreme power, was to the last degree dishonourable; and, joined to his affectation of distinguished love for the people—to be manifested by a repeal of the internal taxes, in order to ease their burdens, or, to use his own *cant*, "not to take from the mouth of labour the bread it has earned"—the practice of such means, and of such artifices, justly subjected Mr. Jefferson to another of Mr. Adams's

charges—"a mean thirst of popularity." And the evidences of these two, support the third charge—"his inordinate ambition."

Mr. Adams will not thank me for the pains I have here taken to justify him before the public for uttering those reproachful charges against Mr. Jefferson: for, in his letter of apology, he may have taken them all back, together with every thing else in the "Correspondence" which could give offence to his half-century friend, the "patriarch" of republicans—*lest they should have an inauspicious influence on the fortunes of his son.*

After all, what is there in Mr. Jefferson's letter, of October 12, to entitle him to the honour of a triumph—by some few so liberally decreed? Suppose Mr. Adams's accusations well founded—as every intelligent reader, and all others acquainted with the affairs of the United States during the last twenty-four years, may justly be inclined to believe—and suppose Mr. Jefferson to be conscious of their truth; did it require any great stretch of charity to forgive his friend and fellow "patriarch,"

"Now at his feet submissive in distress,"

and suing for pardon? and when freely to grant it would present the idea of *his own innocence*, and of *Mr. Adams's guilt*? for, if not guilty, why make apologies, or sue for pardon? And while Mr. Adams's situation bears not the most honourable aspect, that of his friend is singularly happy; it exhibits the loveliness of innocence, the calmness of philosophy, and the meek, forgiving temper of Christianity.

But in what originated Mr. Adams's solicitude so promptly to apologize, in order to prevent, or soften, the displeasure of his old friend? Certainly not the belief that all his reproaches were unfounded. It was, as above suggested, the apprehension of the effect of the "Correspondence," made public prematurely—before the time which he had himself assigned for its publication—and when he had not contemplated a crisis like the present. It was a moment of *high family concern*. His son, who, by deserting his and his father's former friends, and joining their enemies, had risen anew to place and power—a boon which he saw was no longer attainable if he continued in their ranks, and persevered in their principles—was now a candidate for the highest object of republican ambition—the presidency of the United States. This elevation would depend on his standing well with the great dominant party, of which Mr. Jefferson, originally the leader, was still, though not officially, yet in public estimation, the political head. Under these circumstances, Mr. Adams hastens to make apologies and atonement to Mr. Jefferson, for the *just reproaches*, or the *foul slanders*—they must be one or the other—which he had uttered against him. Mr. Adams may avow either, as will best comport with his knowledge, his conscience, or his family interest. His choice will not change my opinion, nor the opinions of the distinguished citizens still living,

who have observed the course of public affairs, and of those who have conducted them, for the last three or four and twenty years.

In letter No. IV, January 10, 1804, Cunningham (as before observed) requests information concerning Mr. Jefferson, supposing "no man living had so thorough a knowledge of his transactions as Mr. Adams." In his answer of the 16th of the same month, Mr. Adams says, "You are mistaken when you say that 'no man living has so much knowledge of Mr. Jefferson's transactions as myself.' *In truth I know but little concerning him.*" Then, giving some details, showing how small had been the intercourse between them, he adds, "Although we agreed always very well, *there was no very close intimacy between us.*" Now observe the contrast. A little more than five years afterwards—when his son John Quincy Adams (having before devoted himself to Mr. Jefferson, and continuing in full favour with his successor, Mr. Madison) had been nominated minister plenipotentiary to Russia—Mr. Adams was capable of making the following declaration: "I sought and obtained 'an interview with Mr. Jefferson.* *With this gentleman I had lived on terms of INTIMATE FRIENDSHIP for five and twenty years,* had acted with him in dangerous times and arduous conflicts, and always found him assiduous, laborious, and, as far as I could judge, upright and faithful."† And, farther on, Mr. Adams says, "I will not take leave of Mr. Jefferson in this place, without declaring my opinion, that the accusations against him, of blind devotion to France, of hostility to England, of hatred to commerce, of partiality and duplicity in his late negotiations with the belligerent powers, are without foundation." In the progress of this Review, the reader will learn how to estimate any of Mr. Adams's opinions, in cases where the interests of himself or of his son may be affected. I accord with Mr. Adams thus far—that Mr. Jefferson's devotion to France was not a *blind* devotion. The elucidation of this remark will appear, when I describe his embargo, and the support of it by John Q. Adams.

So anxious has been Mr. Adams to conciliate the good will of Mr. Jefferson (for the persuasive reason I have mentioned) that he perverts the use of as plain words as any in our language. He has said (in one of his late published letters) that Mr. Jefferson and he were never *rivals*; but that Jefferson and Hamilton were *rivals*! Surely, every reader of English knows, *that they who contend for one common object are rivals.* The common object, for which Adams and Jefferson contended, was the presidency. But Jefferson and Hamilton aimed to effect *different measures* in the administration of the government—and therefore were not *rivals* but *antagonists*.

* This refers to affairs of 1797, Mr. Jefferson being then vice-president.

† Mr. Adams's letter No. XIII, dated May, 29, 1809, in the Boston Patriot.

In noticing the extraordinary ascendancy acquired by Mr. Jefferson over the minds of his partisans and admirers, I remarked, that it would puzzle any one to account for it. And I ask, what evidences has he given to the world, of his being, what he seems generally reputed to be, a *profound philosopher*, and a *great statesman*? The former part of his character (which, by the way, has little to do with government) I leave with philosophers and men of science.* Of the latter, every man of common sense is qualified to judge, from its practical effects. For the rule, "By their fruits "ye shall know them," is alike applicable in politics as in morals. A list of the *beneficent acts* of his eight years' administration of the government of the United States is a *desideratum*. Those of a *contrary character* would rise to a large amount. But let us look back to earlier and more virtuous times. In the war of words with the mother country, antecedent to the war of arms, when every American, who could hold a pen, employed it in defending American rights, it is natural to suppose that Mr. Jefferson's was not idle; and then, probably (though his political lucubrations may not have passed the bounds of Virginia) he gained the reputation of holding a good pen; to which Mr. Adams alludes in a letter to me, extracts from which will appear in the Appendix.† But the performance, for which Mr. Jefferson has been most distinguished, is the Declaration of Independence. This has been extravagantly eulogized, as if rising to a degree of excellence that not one of his contemporaries had the power to reach. In my humble opinion, however, much of its merit is owing to the amendments made when reported to congress, where one fourth of the whole was struck out, and some things (not many indeed) were introduced. In my letter to Mr. Adams on this subject, I remarked, that the Declaration contained *few new ideas*. Mr. Adams, in his answer, says, *not one*; but he thinks the best parts were struck out. I shall give in the Appendix‡ a copy of Mr. Jefferson's draught of the Declaration, which I took some years ago from one in his own hand-writing; by the comparing of which with the Declaration as voted and proclaimed by congress, every reader will be enabled to judge for himself.

But Mr. Jefferson added to the United States the rich and immense territory of Louisiana; thus extending their dominions from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean! Yes—the acquisition was effected in his presidency; and his merit in the case shall now be exhibited.

By the treaty of Oct. 27, 1795, between the United States and Spain, the king, assenting to the claim of the United States to the free navigation of the river Mississippi, from its source to the ocean, stipulated to permit the citizens of the United States, "for the space "of three years, to deposite their merchandises and effects in the "port of New-Orleans, and to export them from thence without

* See Appendix, B. † Appendix, C. ‡ Appendix, D.

“paying any other duty than a fair price for the use of the stores;” and promised either to continue this permission, or to “assign to them, on another part of the banks of the Mississippi, an equivalent establishment.” The benefit of this stipulation was enjoyed by our citizens until 1802, when the Spanish intendant at New-Orleans “occluded” (as Mr. Jefferson said)—shut them out, from this deposite, without assigning any equivalent establishment elsewhere. This violation of the treaty-stipulation was not to be endured; and, upon representations to the government of Spain, the place of deposite was restored. To whom this interruption of our right is to be ascribed, will presently be seen. I presume it was to prevent its recurrence, that Mr. Jefferson instructed his minister at Paris (the late chancellor Livingston) to obtain, as I have understood, a cession of the isle or port of New-Orleans, or some part of the eastern bank of the Mississippi—that is, of West Florida, or of both—to the United States. It is not a little curious, that a negotiation for purchasing supposed *Spanish* territory should be carried on at *Paris*, with the *French* government, instead of *Madrid*, with the government of *Spain*. In the same manner, when, at a subsequent period, Mr. Jefferson proposed to congress the purchase of Florida, *the certain property of Spain*, the negotiation was instituted at *Paris*. The truth is, that France exercised a complete ascendancy over Spain, which was no longer a free agent. Godoy, the prince of peace, the favourite of the queen, ruled Spain in the name of her weak king; and Godoy was Bonaparte’s tool. The “occlusion” of the port of New-Orleans against American merchandise and effects excited keen resentment in the United States; and some were ready to send an armed force to occupy the port; and the poor Spaniard was the subject of severe reproach. But I presume it was not then known, that the king of Spain had been, before that time (viz. on Oct. 1, 1800) compelled to *reconvey* Louisiana to France. This fact exposes the secret of the interruption of our right of deposite at New-Orleans; and it was against the *French* government that the indignation of the United States should have been excited, had the retrocession of Louisiana to France been known. The opening again of the port of New-Orleans arose from the circumstance, that Bonaparte was not prepared to take immediate possession of Louisiana. But the territory having been actually reconveyed to France accounts for the unsuccessful attempts of Mr. Livingston to obtain a cession of Orleans and part of the adjacent province of West Florida.

At length, during the short and feeble administration of the British government which succeeded Mr. Pitt’s, a peace was negotiated at Amiens between Great Britain and France. Bonaparte seized this interval to prepare a fleet and army to go and take possession of New-Orleans and the whole province of Louisiana. But the British government soon perceived, that it was, in effect, an *armistice*, rather than a *peace*, which had been concluded at Amiens; and that the

war must be renewed. And finding that Bonaparte was going to add the immense province of Louisiana—a new world—to the dominions of France, a British fleet was despatched to block up the ports (in Holland) where Bonaparte had assembled military forces, and ships to transport them to New-Orleans.

It was in this state of things that Bonaparte became willing to transfer to the United States—not the island of New-Orleans and part of the adjacent territory—but the whole province of Louisiana—the *whole or no part*. For he was justly apprehensive, that, its retrocession to France being then known, Great Britain would send an adequate force, and take possession of it for herself. If therefore he could raise some millions of dollars by the sale of the province to the United States, the sum would be so much clear gain. Under these circumstances, the transfer to the United States was made, and (if I mistake not) rather pressed on our envoys, chancellor Livingston and Mr. Monroe; and they agreed to receive it, stipulating the price at fifteen millions of dollars. They gave to Mr. King, American minister in London, information of the treaty; with which the British government, to whom he made known the transfer, was perfectly satisfied. And I recollect that when Alexander Baring (son-in-law to the late Mr. Bingham, and whom I had known in Philadelphia) came from England to Washington, to receive the six per cent. stock created to pay for this purchase, he told me, that the British government would sooner have paid the money stipulated for the purchase, than have suffered Louisiana to become a province of France.

Thus, to British policy and interest are the United States indebted for the acquisition of Louisiana. And, if *gratitude* ever enters into the consideration of *nations*, we owe it to Britain for that acquisition, as really as to France for her assistance in acquiring our independence. But on the score of *gratitude*, in these two cases, we are indebted neither to one nor to the other. Each of them acted to serve her own interest exclusively: France, to diminish the power of Britain by cutting off thirteen flourishing colonies; and Britain, to prevent an *accession* to the power of France in possessing the immense territory of Louisiana, and a consequent control over all our western states, which depended on the Mississippi, and the rivers running into it, for the conveyance of their boundless products to a market. Yes, we owe it to the naval power of Britain, that Louisiana is not now a province of France. Bonaparte had already sent his prefect, Mr. Laussat, to New-Orleans, to receive possession; and he waited only for the arrival of the French fleet and army, to take upon himself the administration of the government.* Before I take leave of Louisiana, I will add a few observations.

At the close of the seven years' war, so disastrous to France,

* See Appendix, E.

which was terminated by the peace of 1763, she ceded to Spain—apparently in consideration of the losses which the latter had sustained by being drawn into that war, towards its close, in aid of France—the province of Louisiana, westward of the river Mississippi, and the island of New-Orleans on its eastern side. The whole of Florida was ceded by France and Spain (each her part) to Great Britain. In the course of the war of our revolution, France and Spain became once more engaged in a war with Great Britain. Spain seized the occasion to possess herself of Florida; and, at the treaty of peace of 1783, Britain relinquished her right to it.

I entertain no doubt, that at that time the government of France contemplated the regaining of Louisiana, and waited only for some favourable events to accomplish her purpose. It was unquestionably with this in view, that, in the negotiations at Paris, in 1782, for effecting a general peace, the French minister represented to our commissioners, authorized to treat of peace with Great Britain, that they ought not to claim the country westward of the Allegany mountain, but to suffer it to go into the hands of Spain. Mr. Jay, however, (for he was obliged for a while to act alone, though Dr. Franklin was also a commissioner) resisted all the French intrigues, as well at Paris as in London; and thus that country was secured to the United States. It was, unquestionably, with a view to this land-scheme, and some other plans injurious to the United States, that the French government exerted itself, and successfully, through its minister to the United States, la Luzerne, and the secretary of legation, Marbois, to obtain from congress instructions to the American ministers for negotiating a peace with Great Britain, wholly unworthy of the earlier firm, dignified and independent acts of that body. The commissioners were instructed “to undertake “nothing in the negotiations for peace or truce, without the know-“ledge and concurrence of the ministers of the king of France, and “ultimately to govern themselves by their advice and opinion.” This appeared to Mr. Jay so dishonourable to the United States, and fraught with such evil consequences, that he laid the instruction aside, and, in his negotiations with the British minister, considered only what the important interests of his country required; and thus formed the basis of the treaty of peace, so highly advantageous to the United States.

In pursuance of our treaty of 1795, with Spain, commissioners were to be appointed to run the boundary line between the territory of the United States and Florida, from the river Mississippi to the Atlantic ocean. Andrew Ellicott was the commissioner on the part of the United States; and, with the requisite attendants, he repaired to the Natchez, the place designated in the treaty for the first meeting of the commissioners. From the time of his entering the Mississippi, after his descent by the Ohio, and coming to the first Spanish posts, and thence proceeding downwards towards the

Natchez, there were mysterious appearances, suggesting the idea that delays and difficulties would be interposed, to prevent the running of the boundary line. The apprehensions of Mr. Ellicott were realized, after his arrival at the Natchez. He there received satisfactory information, that the governor in chief at New Orleans, and the sub-governor (Gayoso) at the Natchez, in some private and confidential communications, had suffered the secret to escape them—that it was intended, by delays and evasions, to defeat the attempt on the part of the United States to run the boundary line, and the execution of the treaty, in what concerned that country. Mr. Ellicott states, that governor Gayoso's original letter to a confidential friend, to that effect, had been in his hands. Accordingly, in the correspondence of this governor with Mr. Ellicott are seen a series of apologies, excuses, and empty professions, all contemptible, and offered in the face of treaty articles too plain to require a moment's hesitation as to their meaning. One of the articles stipulated the evacuation of the posts occupied by Spanish troops on the eastern bank of the Mississippi, within the known boundary of the United States. Of these the Spaniards still kept possession. All these occurrences are accounted for by the information next received, and stated by Mr. Ellicott—“*That the country either was or would be ceded to the Republic of France.*”* It will be recollected that Spain had concurred with the other most considerable European nations in warring against France, in the early years of her revolution: but meeting with defeats, and in danger of being overrun by the French arms, her prime minister, Godoy, made peace with France: and for this act, at that time so auspicious to Spain, he had conferred on him the extraordinary title of *Prince of Peace*. This was in the year 1793. From this time the Spanish councils were under the influence of the French republican government; and, eventually, appear to have been in a state of complete subjugation, in whatever materially concerned the interests of France. And to that controlling influence are to be ascribed all the delays, difficulties and injuries experienced by the United States and their citizens, in every thing relating to their interests in the country in question.

So much for the friendship of France to the United States; which, according to the declarations and demands of her revolutionary rulers, and of many of our own citizens, imposed on the United States obligations of everlasting gratitude! That it was for the purpose of securing the independence of the United States that France rendered the aid we received from her, is true; but this was solely to weaken her old adversary, by lopping off an important limb. In justification of his treating with the Americans, Louis XVI said expressly, that he acted “*with no other view than to put an end to the predominant power which England abused*

* Ellicott's Journal, p. 44.

"in every part of the globe;" and, "that the only means of being secured from it, was to *seize the opportunity of diminishing it.*" That opportunity was the war in which we had engaged, to separate the United States from Great Britain. The king said, further, that he formed a connexion with the United States, "because his SAFETY, THE INTEREST OF HIS PEOPLE, *invariable policy*, and, above all, the *secret projects* of the court of London, *imperiously laid him under the necessity.*" The secret projects, of which the French government was so apprehensive, were doubtless the measures then contemplated by the British government to affect a reconciliation and re-union of the United States with Great Britain; and to defeat them, and so to prevent a re-union, was the leading motive to the French alliance; while Americans fondly believed, *that friendship for them was its basis.* And congress itself, from *feeling or policy*, pronounced Louis the Sixteenth, "the PROTECTOR of the RIGHTS OF MANKIND."* Indeed the citizens of the United States, rejoiced at the assurance of the aid and co-operation of France, thought only of the *benefit*, without adverting to the *motives* in which it originated.

During our revolutionary war, and ever since, we have been taught to believe that Louis XVI, and his queen, Maria Antoinette, entertained a personal regard to the United States and their cause. This was *possible*, and in the glow of our gratitude we cheerfully believed it. But it was *unnatural* that a monarchical power, whose will was law, should desire to promote the establishment of free republican governments. This idea, now so obvious, is shown to be correct, by the statement of the fact, in the interesting memoirs of madame Campan, published at Paris since the restoration of the Bourbons to the throne of France. And we see it strikingly exemplified in the avowed principles of the emperors and kings who compose the so called "Holy Alliance."

The sentiments of the persons who composed the court of Louis XVI were doubtless similar to those manifested by the king and queen; but all sacrificed their feelings, in regard to republicanism, for the sake of humbling their great rival, England. Of all the French officers, *of name*, who served in the United States, and returned to France, la Fayette, I believe, stands alone, invincibly firm in his original principles, for the establishment and maintenance of free governments. We have seen the present monarch of France, his ministers and armies, by their operations in Spain, the last year, violating her independence, and overturning her free government; and who can doubt that his brother, Louis XVI, his ministers and armies, under like circumstances, would have acted the same part? And that their aid to the United States, in supporting their independence, was rendered solely for the interest of France, I trust has been satisfactorily shown.†

* Resolve, May 6, 1778, in the journals of Congress.

† Of the expenditures of France, in the maintenance of troops and ships applied *directly* to our aid, I have no data on which to form an estimate; but the

In the face of all these clear and incontrovertible evidences, that the views of France in aiding us in our revolutionary contest were *exclusively selfish*, and that she aimed at doing serious injuries to the United States in its conclusion, Mr. Jefferson in his letter to Mazzei* charged them with “ingratitude and injustice towards France”! He charged the enlightened and eminent statesmen and patriots who formed the federal constitution, and who organized, and were then administering, the government under it, as “Anglican—“monarchical-aristocratic; whose *aroved* object it was, to impose “on the people the *substance*, as they had already given them the “*forms*, of the British government.” And, after mentioning various measures of the federal government as political “heresies—*estab-*“*lished for the purposes of corruption*,” he points his reproaches at the officers of our government and the members of congress who had embraced them—“the men,” he says, “who were Solomons in “counsel and Samsons in combat, but whose hair had been cut off “by the whore England.” For this infamous slander, which embraced Washington, Hamilton, and all the eminent men who had formed the constitution, and established the measures referred to, Washington, when he became a private citizen, called Jefferson to account; requiring of him, in a tone of unusual severity, an explanation of that letter. In what manner the latter humbled himself, and appeased the just resentment of Washington, will never be known; as, some time after his death, this correspondence was not to be found; and a diary for an important period of his presidency was also missing. My information on this subject is derived from an authentic source. The late Dr. David Stuart, of Virginia, who married the widow of Mrs. Washington’s son Custis, first mentioned the matter to me, twenty years ago; and five years afterwards, at my request, stated the circumstances in detail, in a letter, with a voluntary “permission to make what use of it I should think pro-“per.” A train of occurrences within my knowledge would enable me to unravel what may seem mysterious in this affair; but I forbear.

Prior to the appearance of Mr. Jefferson’s letter to Mazzei, “there was,” says Dr. Stuart, “a friendly correspondence between “him and Washington—since then, none;” and “before that letter, “he used always either to call on him when passing by, or to send “an apology for not doing it.”

capture, plunder, and wanton destruction, of American ships and merchandise, by the French, have been estimated, by a well informed and judicious merchant, the late Thomas Fitzsimons of Philadelphia, at fifty millions of dollars; to wit—twenty millions under the orders of the Directory and their agents, and thirty millions during the imperial reign of Bonaparte. These fifty millions may fairly be set off against the expenditures of France directly made by her in the cause of the United States. The loans of money by France to the United States were all repaid. The estimates of Mr. Fitzsimons were made at my request, and communicated to me by a letter which I have not yet found; but I well remember their amount.

* Mazzei, an Italian gentleman, was in Virginia prior to our revolution; and then the apparently intimate acquaintance between him and Mr. Jefferson took place. Mazzei returned to Italy.

Notwithstanding these lamentations of Mr. Jefferson to his friend Mazzei, of palpable deviations from republican principles in the *form of the federal constitution*, and in the *administration of the government*, under Washington, Hamilton, and the eminent federalists of that period in congress; yet, after he had gained the president's chair, I do not recollect a single amendment to that "Anglican-monarchical-aristocratic" constitution to have been recommended by him; nor, that more than one was made during his presidency; and that one should have been called an *alteration*, not an *amendment*. Its object was, by requiring the electors to *designate* the person to whom they gave their votes for president, and the one whom they voted for to be vice-president, to prevent the recurrence of a contest like that between him and Mr. Burr, when the states represented in the house were equally divided. And as to his *measures*, I know not any, that related to *principles* of government, which Mr. Jefferson could pretend were more *republican* than those of his predecessors. As to other principles, I will not say there was no difference; but in regard to them I content myself with remarking, that, during Washington's administration, and a part of that of his immediate successor, there were no ostentatious professions of regard to the public welfare, nor similar declarations repeated and repeated of a desire of settling existing controversies, in an amicable and friendly manner, with any foreign nation.

Under Mr. Jefferson's administration, three treaties were negotiated with Great Britain. The object of the first (negotiated by Mr. King, pursuant to his instructions) was, an adjustment of the northwestern boundary; but, from an apprehension that its execution might derogate from a claim as to the northern boundary of Louisiana, it was ratified on the part of the United States with an exception which defeated the treaty. Another, a treaty of amity and commerce with Great Britain, was negotiated by ministers of Mr. Jefferson's own selection—James Monroe and the late William Pinkney. These gentlemen, it must be presumed, well understood the interests of their country; and no one will question the diligence and faithfulness of their endeavours to promote and secure it, in the terms of that treaty. They thought the *informal arrangement* offered by the British negotiators—in whose sincerity they saw reason to confide—would prove, *in practice*, an adequate protection to our seamen, on board American merchant vessels, against impressment. In reference to that informal arrangement, they say, "We persuade ourselves we shall place the business almost, if not "altogether, on as good a footing as we should have done by treaty, had the project which we offered them been adopted."* This treaty, however, Mr. Jefferson sent back, without laying it before

* From different sources I received information, from which it appeared clearly, to my apprehension, that with all the parade, kept up for several years, of negotiating a treaty of amity and commerce with Great Britain, Mr. Jefferson really desired none. A letter from a friend of his, now before me, contains this passage:

the senate, although it was then in session ; because there was not a *formal stipulation*, by an article in the treaty, against any im-
pressions whatever, of seamen on board those vessels : a stipula-
tion which, from the experience of the American government, dur-
ing a series of years, he had reason, amounting to moral certainty,
to believe to be unattainable ; and therefore, I infer, he made such
a formal stipulation a *sine qua non*. A third treaty he readily rati-
fied. This was negotiated by Mr. King, pursuant to Mr. Jeffer-
son's instructions. Its object was, by a compromise with the
British government, to put an end to the controversy concerning
the ante-revolution debts due to British merchants, and to extin-
guish the British claims, by paying to its government a round sum ;
in consideration of which, that government undertook to satisfy the
demands of its own subjects. This sum was six hundred thousand
pounds sterling—equal to \$2,264,000 ; which was paid from the
treasury of the United States. The *merchants* in the commercial
states were the debtors to the British merchants, and generally
speaking (I always understood) had, prior to Mr. Jay's treaty, paid or
compromised their debts, to the satisfaction of their British creditors.

The treaty of peace of 1783 recognized those debts ; and the
United States stipulated, that no legal impediments should be op-
posed to their recovery : but such impediments were opposed ; and
that stipulation remained a dead letter. When, therefore, fresh
causes of controversy arose, in 1793 and 1794, Washington, to
prevent a war with Great Britain, instituted a new mission to that
government, and appointed Mr. Jay, the able and principal negotia-
tor of the treaty of peace of 1783, envoy extraordinary and min-
ister plenipotentiary, to negotiate and by treaty to settle the new con-
troversies, and those which had arisen from the non-execution of
some of the articles of the treaty of peace. In this negotiation,
Mr. Jay honestly renewed, or rather provided for the due perform-
ance of, the original stipulation relative to British debts. This,
unquestionably, was one thing which contributed to render his trea-
ty unpopular, in some parts of the Union ; while its terminating the
recent controversies which hazarded our peace with Great-Britain
—disappointing the vehement haters of that country and at the
same time ardent lovers of France—raised up enemies to its ratifi-
cation, in every part of the Union. It was ratified, however, and
executed ; and procured for our merchants, who had suffered by
British spoliations, indemnities to the amount of more than five
millions of dollars, paid to them by the British government. What
did they obtain for ten fold more aggravated spoliations committed
on their vessels and merchandise, and to ten times that amount, by
the republican and imperial governments of France ? Not one cent.

“I perfectly remember he terminated a conversation on this subject, by observing,
“that before a treaty could be ratified with Great Britain, she might no longer exist
“as an independent nation.” He imagined (as I learned from another source) that
Great Britain must sink under the weight of her debt, and the arms of Bonaparte.

Every independent American must, I presume, view this subject (our relations with France) in the light in which I have now placed it ; and be willing, should it become necessary, to concur with the only great, free and independent nation on earth, besides our own, in measures which the interest and welfare of both may require, to prevent the re-establishment of despotism in the New World.

That France afforded assistance to the United States, in our revolutionary war, exclusively for her own interest, had long ago been manifested ; and it seems impossible that with Mr. Jefferson it should ever have been a subject of doubt. But the people of the United States having unwittingly entertained and steadily cherished the contrary opinion, their prejudice was too strong to yield even to the force of moral demonstration ; and the leaders of the opponents of the federal administration seized on this honest prejudice in favour of France, to obtain popularity ; while by every means they excited and promoted opposite sentiments towards Great Britain, which the resentful passions engendered in the revolutionary war rendered it easy to propagate among the people. These prejudices, diligently cultivated, were among the chief means by which Mr. Jefferson and his partisans acquired a predominance ; and they may now safely abandon the scaffolding by which they rose to power. Still, however, for the purpose of enjoying, exclusively, all the benefits to be derived from its possession, they continue to arrogate to themselves the name of *Republicans* ; willing and desirous that their federal opponents should, by the people, be deemed aristocrats and monarchists. Yet to the *Federalists* are they indebted for their *republican constitution* and *republican government* ; both of which are now very good things, and in their hands quite unexceptionable. Many years ago, in the senate of the United States, I heard the most frank, the most bold, and in my opinion the most able politician, of the, so called, republican party, pronounce a eulogy on the constitution, as strong and honourable as words could express. And even Mr. Jefferson must have entertained the like opinion ; or, in conformity with his libellous remarks on it to his friend Mazzei, he would have proposed to change its features. And now he appears to desire only one alteration—to destroy, as I have before remarked, the independence of the judges. And having three and twenty years ago pronounced the citizens of the United States, composed of the different political parties, “ all republicans, all federalists,” it might have been expected that by this time, at least, he would be willing we should together form *one people, one nation*, equally entitled to, and equally enjoying the advantages to be derived from, the government of our common country ; but it is not so. In his letter to lieutenant governor Barry, before mentioned, he *affects* to doubt (for if he *really* doubts he must be a blinder and more narrow-minded politician than any of his intelligent followers)—he, I say, affects to doubt whether it would be safe to admit federalists into the republican

“camp!” that is, to admit to a participation of the public offices, the men whom he, before the representatives of the nation and a numerous assembly of citizens, pronounced, either *honestly* or *deceitfully* (he may choose which term he pleases) to be republicans! And he desires still to foster the spirit of party, by party names; and, assigning to his own the name of *whigs*—originally in England designating the friends of liberty, in opposition to the partisans of the tyrannical race of the Stuarts, who were called *tories*—he would brand all federalists with the latter name, to induce a belief among the people, *that federalists are enemies to liberty!* What federalist can feel a shadow of respect for such a man? If they suppose him sincere in broaching such ideas, they must think lightly of his pretensions to wisdom as a statesman: if insincere, I need not say what sentiment they will feel and express.

Wailings for the condition of the Catholics of Ireland, so long suffering under the Protestant oppression of the English government, have been heard throughout the United States. The Dissenters in England are also oppressed. Both pay tithes to support the ecclesiastics of the established church. But what is the real condition of Federalists in the United States? How does it differ from that of the Dissenters and Catholics in the United Kingdom of Great Britain? Federalists have long been paying tithes to the established Political Clergy of the United States, who exclusively enjoy all the benefices. Surely there are many high-minded, liberal men, among the reigning class, who must see this injustice, and be willing to provide a remedy. One such man, elected the Executive Head of the NATION, and having in view only the “general welfare,” and not the continuance of himself in power by a re-election, might remove the existing evil, and “set the people to rights.” For the enjoyment of equal rights, *Federal Emancipation* is as necessary in the *United States*, as *Catholic Emancipation* is in *Ireland*.

In stating the preceding facts, and the reflections they suggested, in regard to Mr. Jefferson, I have written with the freedom which the occasion seemed to require, but without the consciousness of any personal animosity. Towards me his deportment has ever been marked with urbanity. It is in reference to his conduct and character as a public man, that he is presented as a just subject of reproach; such as, on a further and full investigation, he will, in my apprehension, appear to the future impartial historian of our country. The sentiments exhibited in his letter to lieutenant governor Barry, *at this period*, I confess I could not have expected. That they have excited in me a degree of indignation, I cannot, nor do I desire to, conceal.

SECTION II.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, AND MR. JEFFERSON'S EMBARGO.

THE first eight letters in the "Correspondence" were interchanged between Nov. 28, 1803, and March 15, 1804. After the lapse of four years and a half, appears No. IX, dated Sept. 19, 1808, from Cunningham; in which he mentions THE EMBARGO; and, after "lamenting that the bitterness of rebuke so often manifested towards his son (John Quincy Adams) had been extended "to Mr. Adams himself," asks his opinion "on that public measure, "which had so agitated our country," and in producing which his son had acted so conspicuous a part. This unlucky question was the putting of a match to a mass of combustibles, which soon kindled to a flame, and threatened to burn me up.

John Q. Adams and myself were, in 1803, chosen by the legislature of Massachusetts to represent that state in the senate of the United States; and we took our seats there in the session which commenced in October of that year. He was then a federalist, and for a good while acted in that character. Some cases, however, occurred, in which he displayed a zeal in coincidence with the views and wishes of the president, Mr. Jefferson. He particularly distinguished himself in the attempt to expel from the senate John Smith of Ohio, as one concerned in Aaron Burr's conspiracy, or project, whatever it was: for Burr and his accomplices were the marked objects of Mr. Jefferson's hatred and revenge. There were passages in Mr. Adams's report in Smith's case, which outraged, I believe, every distinguished lawyer in America. The process of law, with its "pace of snail," was too slow for his vengeance. But this by the by. It was the unfortunate question of the Embargo, which, in regard to myself, set the ink a-running through president Adams's pen; and it continued running in the whole of his correspondence, not unmixed with gall. Of the Embargo, therefore, it is necessary to give an account.

The emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, in the prosecution of his plan of universal dominion, having overturned the Prussian monarchy—and resting a little while in its capital, Berlin—on the 21st of November 1806, issued a decree, called the Berlin decree; whose object was, the destruction of the commerce of Great Britain, his persevering enemy, and the only country in Europe (the waters of the sea intervening) which his arms could not reach. The decree consisted of ten articles. By the first, "The British Islands are "declared in a state of blockade." By the second, "All commerce "and correspondence with the British Islands are prohibited." And by the fifth, "All trade in English merchandise is forbidden;

“all merchandise belonging to England, or coming from its manufacturers and colonies, is declared lawful prize.”*

Plain as was the intention of this decree, from the words of it, yet an interpretation, indicating an exception favourable to the neutral commerce of the United States, was given to it, by the French minister of marine—but unsanctioned by the emperor, or even by his minister for foreign affairs, to whose department (as the minister of marine avowed) the question more properly belonged. That interpretation, however, served to amuse our government—willing to be amused—even when not bearing on its face (to use the words of president Adams in another case) “the plausible appearance of probability” of its giving the real meaning of the decree. At length the time arrived, when it suited the convenience of the emperor to carry his decree into rigorous execution. The commerce of the United States with the British dominions was probably at that time of as much importance to the former, as their commerce with all the world besides; and, as the benefits of a fair commerce are reciprocal, Great Britain shared with the United States the advantages of that intercourse; and so far the views of the imperial tyrant were obstructed. He had long shown himself indifferent to the interests of his own commercial subjects: the plunder of conquered nations supplied the place of that revenue which would accrue from foreign commerce. He, of course, would be perfectly regardless of the interests of the United States. So the Berlin decree went into full operation. The papers on the subject were transmitted to our government from Paris, by general Armstrong, our minister at the imperial court; and were communicated by the president to congress, with the following message, recommending an

EMBARGO.

“To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.

“The communications now made, shewing the great and increasing dangers with which our vessels, our seamen, and merchandise, are threatened on the high seas and elsewhere, from the belligerent powers of Europe, and it being of the greatest importance to keep in safety these essential resources, I deem it my duty to recommend the subject to the consideration of congress, who will doubtless perceive all the advantages which may be expected from an inhibition of the departure of our vessels from the ports of the United States.

“Their wisdom will also see the necessity of making every preparation for whatever events may grow out of the present crisis.

“I ask a return of the letters of Messrs. Armstrong and Champagny, which it would be improper to make public.”

“Dec. 18, 1807.

TH. JEFFERSON.”

The last paragraph of the message (in italics) is omitted in the

* The whole decree, and the documents communicated with it, by the President, are in the volumes of State Papers, published by Wait and Sons.

copy in the state papers, as well as in the journal of the senate; but is retained in the journal of the house of representatives. It was, on a formal motion in the senate, ordered not to be entered on their journal. I cannot assign, for I do not recollect, any reason for it. Possibly the mover felt some delicacy on the subject, after voting for the law recommended in the message; seeing a part of the documents, on which it was *avowedly founded*, were *withdrawn*, and so far *the basis of his vote was taken away*.

No. 1. Was a proclamation, dated October 16, 1807, by the king of Great Britain, requiring his "natural born subjects, seafaring men," serving in foreign vessels, to return home, according to their duty and allegiance, to defend their own country, then menaced and endangered, from the arms of France and of the nations subjected to her power, whom she honoured with the name of allies. Such proclamations are common among nations engaged in war; and no well-informed man will, I presume, dispute their justness. And because it was known that numbers of such seamen did continue to serve in foreign vessels, British naval officers were required to take and bring away all such persons who should be found serving in any foreign merchant vessel; but with a special injunction to offer no violence to such vessel, or to the remainder of the crew.

No. 2. Was an extract of a letter, dated September 18, 1807, from the French grand judge, minister of justice, to the imperial advocate general for the council of prizes. It was an answer to some questions which concerned the execution of the Berlin decree.

"1st. May vessels of war, by virtue of the imperial decree of the 21st of November last, seize, on board neutral vessels, either English property, or even all merchandise proceeding from the English manufactories or territory?"

"Answer. His majesty has intimated, that as he did not think proper to express any exception in his decree, there is no ground for making any in its execution, in relation to any whomsoever."

"2. His majesty has postponed a decision on the question, Whether armed French vessels ought to capture neutral vessels bound to or from England, even when they have no English merchandise on board." (Signed) "REGNIER."

Of these two papers no secret was made; and for a plain reason; the British proclamation had many days before been published in the newspapers. The copy laid by Mr. Jefferson before the senate had been cut out of a newspaper—a form not the most respectful, of a document laid before the legislature of the United States, by their president. In like manner, the *substance*, if not the words, of the grand judge Regnier's letter had been published. But these two papers had excited little, if any, concern among those most interested—our merchants and seafaring people: they saw, in the proclamation, not an *increased*, but a *diminished* danger of impressments; and French cruisers on the seas were then few in number.

The third paper was a letter, dated September 24, 1807, from general Armstrong to the French minister for foreign affairs, Champagny ; asking him, whether the report he had just heard was true—“that a new and extended construction, highly injurious to the commerce of the United States, was about to be given to the Imperial decree of the 21st of November 1806” (the Berlin decree.)

The fourth document was Champagny’s answer to Armstrong, bearing date October 7, 1807, and which, with a little difference in the phraseology, is the same with that of the grand judge, Regnier, before mentioned, to the imperial advocate general ; from whom, indeed, Champagny says he received the explanation. These are his words : “ His majesty has considered every neutral vessel, going from English ports, with cargoes of English merchandise, or of English origin, as lawfully seized by French armed vessels.”

Here an obvious question presents itself. Seeing Armstrong’s letter simply asks the question, whether his information about the Berlin decree was correct—and Champagny’s answer tells him that it was—why did Mr. Jefferson ask a return of these two papers, saying, “ it would be improper to make them public?” The solution may be found in the last paragraph of Champagny’s letter, in which he says, “ The decree of blockade has now been issued “eleven months. The principal powers of Europe, [meaning Holland, Spain, and the other powers which the arms of France had subjected to her control] far from protesting against its provisions, “have adopted them. They have perceived that *its execution must be COMPLETE to render it more effectual.*” The commerce of the United States surpassed that of all the other neutral nations ; and with the British dominions was very extensive, and of vast importance to both. To render the blockade of the British Islands “complete,” the commerce of neutrals with them *must cease.* This object, in respect to the United States, could be accomplished only by an *Embargo.* In four days after the arrival at Washington of Armstrong’s despatches by the Revenge, containing the letters of the grand judge and Bonaparte’s minister Champagny, Mr. Jefferson recommended his *Unlimited Embargo.** One more fact:—On the

* The following extract, recently found among my papers, of a letter, dated January 2, 1808 (eleven days after the embargo law had passed) from a respectable gentleman in New-York to his father, a member of congress at Washington, merits attention.

“It is said, and from correct sources, that Mr. Armstrong gave notice, in Amsterdam, that a general embargo would take place in the United States immediately on the arrival of the Revenge ; and that, in one day, sugar rose from 13 “to 19 dollars, and coffee from 21 to 27 stivers, in consequence of that information.”

The Revenge arrived at New-York. The bearer of the despatches was Dr. Bullock, surgeon to the marine corps. New-York papers announced her arrival, and, among other articles of news, stated this—that the French Emperor said *there should be no neutrals.* I did not doubt the truth of the report ; but, not having the evidence of the fact, in my first letter to Gov. Sullivan, Feb. 16, 1808, on the embargo, I merely asked the question, “ Has the French emperor declared that he “will have no neutrals?” J. Q. Adams, in his letter to Mr. Otis, dated the follow-

8th of February, 1803, (less than two months after the passing of the embargo law) the secretary of state, Mr. Madison, in his letter to general Armstrong, on this subject, says, "The conduct of the French government, in giving this extended operation to its decree, and indeed in issuing one with such an apparent or doubtful import against the rights of the sea, is the more extraordinary, inasmuch as the inability to enforce it on that element, exhibited the measure in the light of an *EMPTY MENACE*."*—So then, Mr. Jefferson's embargo, which prostrated our immense commerce, which ruined many, and seriously injured all, of our citizens, was founded on an *empty menace*! I now leave every intelligent reader to judge, whether the real object of the embargo was, "to keep in safety our vessels and merchandise,"—or, to render the French emperor's decree of blockade of the British Islands "complete." To him, it is certain, the embargo was acceptable; he passed a decree to enforce its execution. And at a subsequent period (August 5, 1810) his minister informed general Armstrong, that "the emperor applauded the embargo."

Such were the grounds, or pretexts, for the embargo. The president's message, and the four papers accompanying it, were referred to a committee, of whom John Q. Adams was one. In a short time they reported a bill for laying an embargo. It was read once. A motion made to read it, immediately, a second time, was objected to; it was repugnant to a standing rule of the senate, wisely formed, to prevent hasty decisions. To remove this difficulty, the senate, on a motion for the purpose, "*Resolved*, That so much of the 12th rule for doing business in the senate, as requires that three readings shall be on three different days, unless the senate unanimously direct otherwise, be suspended for three days." The bill was then read a second time, as in committee of the whole, and reported to the house without amendment. Then the bill (having been quickly engrossed) was read a third time, and passed—yeas 22, nays 6. Those who voted in the negative were

Messrs. Crawford,	Maclay,
Goodrich,	Pickering,
Hillhouse,	White.

The time occupied in this business, from the reception of the president's message, to the passing of the bill, was about four hours. It was Friday. A motion was made to postpone the further consideration of the bill until the next Monday: it passed in the negative. On motion of Mr. Crawford, that the bill be postponed till the next day, it passed in the negative, yeas 12, nays 16. Mr.

ing 31st of March, roundly affirmed, that "The French emperor had *not* declared that he would have no neutrals." Yet it afterwards appeared that gen. Armstrong officially communicated the emperor's declaration, "That the Americans should be compelled to take the positive character of either *allies* or *enemies*;" that is, they should not be *neutrals*.

* State Papers, vol. 1808—9, page 232.

Adams was among the nays. No member of the senate displayed equal zeal for the passing of the bill. In opposing a postponement, to obtain further information, and to consider a measure of such moment, of such universal concern, Mr. Adams made this memorable declaration: “The president has recommended the measure on “his high responsibility: *I would not consider—I would not deliberate: I would act. Doubtless the PRESIDENT possesses such further information as will justify the measure!*” This sentiment was so extraordinary, that I instantly wrote it down. It shocked even Mr. Jefferson’s devoted partisans. “However I may *vote*, (a member “was heard to remark) that is too much for me to *say*.” For my own part, I originally viewed, and I still view, the sentiment as so abhorrent to the principles of a free government, so derogatory to the character of a member of congress, such a dereliction of duty, and so disgraceful to a man of sense, that I am incapable of conceiving of any counterbalance in official honours and emoluments. An embassy, a judgeship, or the presidency, to an honourable and independent mind, would, in comparison, be “as a drop in the bucket—and the small dust of the balance.” Upon the principle advanced by J. Q. Adams, what becomes of the “checks and balances,” which are the pillars of his father’s “Great Work” (as it has been called) on the American Constitutions of Government? By the constitution of the United States, the senate and house of representatives were intended as checks on the acts of each other, and both as checks on those of the president. The sentiment expressed by Mr. Adams resolves the whole business of legislation into the will of the executive.

The bill, passed by the senate, was immediately sent to the house of representatives. There it was long and earnestly contested; and did not pass until Tuesday, the 22d of December. On the same day it received the president’s approbation, and became a law.

In the year 1807, the registered tonnage of the United States, employed in foreign trade, amounted to 848,306 tons. Of this, Massachusetts owned 310,309 tons, almost equal to the united tonnage of the three states of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland, which amounted only to 322,336 tons. That vast quantity of shipping belonging to Massachusetts, giving employment to many thousands of her citizens on the water and on the land, was to be laid waste by the embargo, unlimited in its duration, and contemplated, I have not a shadow of doubt, by its author, to endure as long as the war between France and Great Britain should continue.

Seeing then, as every impartial reader will *now* see and acknowledge, that the *reasons*, presented to congress for imposing the embargo, were but *shallow pretences*, and, as resting on the Berlin decree, amounted, according to Mr. Madison, only to “an empty menace;” and as, according to J. Q. Adams, as will presently be

shown, the four papers laid before congress, containing Mr. Jefferson's reasons for recommending an embargo, were but four "naughts;" and viewing with horror and indignation its destructive effects; I thought it to be my duty to give to the greatest navigating state in the union, which I in part represented, such information concerning it as was in my power; that the state might take such measures to obtain a removal of the evil as her wisdom should direct. For this purpose, I wrote a long letter to Mr. Sullivan, governor of Massachusetts, to be laid before the legislature, then in session; and through that channel to pass to all my fellow-citizens. But, from a knowledge of his party politics, apprehensive that my object would not be obtained through him, I sent a copy to my excellent friend; the lately deceased George Cabot—a man of so enlightened a mind, of such wisdom, virtue and piety, that one must travel far, very far, to find his equal. After waiting a few days, finding that the original was not communicated to the legislature, Mr. Cabot sent the copy to a printer. It first appeared in a small pamphlet; and, being republished in pamphlets and newspapers, was soon spread over the United States. In this letter I neither named nor alluded to my colleague, J. Q. Adams.

The governor refused to communicate my letter to the legislature. He sent it back to me, in a letter of rebuke, for my expecting him to make such a communication. In my reply, justifying the step I had taken, I said, "I confess there seemed to be a peculiar fitness in a senator's addressing the legislature from whom he immediately derives his appointment. And in the present case, seeing my letter embraced the highest concerns of our country, in which Massachusetts holds so large a stake, especially in a commercial point of view, I could not imagine that I was offending her chief magistrate, in presenting a view of those concerns to him to be afterwards laid before the *legislature*." This reply was dated the 9th of March. On the 18th the governor wrote me a long, but not *very courteous*, letter. My answer, not destitute of reciprocity, was still longer; and, in the estimation of my friends in Boston, who caused it to be printed, was, in all respects, a complete vindication. The last paragraph in the governor's letter contained these words: "Mr. Adams, your colleague, is quite opposed to you in his opinion of the embargo. He voted for it, and still considers it as a wise measure, and as a necessary one. I have his letters before me upon it." In answer to this, I say, "True—he did vote for the embargo; and I must now tell your excellency how he advocated that measure. It is not willingly, sir, that I speak of him in an address to the public. Though often opposed in opinion on national measures, there has never existed for a moment any personal difference between us. But as you have now contrasted his opinion with mine, to invalidate my public statements, you compel me to relate the fact."

“In my first letter I informed your excellency of the haste with which the embargo bill was passed in the senate. I also informed you that a ‘little more time was repeatedly asked, *to obtain further information, and to consider* a measure of such moment, ‘of such universal concern; but that those requests were denied;’ ‘and I must now add, by no one more zealously than by Mr. Adams, my colleague. Hear his words. But even your excellency’s strong faith in the president’s supreme wisdom may pause, while independent men will be shocked, at the answer of my colleague to those requests. ‘The president (said he) has recommended the measure on his high responsibility: I would *not consider—I would not deliberate*: I would *act*. Doubtless the *President* possesses such further information as will justify the measure!— ‘Need I give to your excellency any other proof (though other proof abounds) of ‘blind confidence in our rulers?’ Need I give further evidence of ‘the dangerous extent of executive influence?’ When the people of Massachusetts see a man, of Mr. Adams’s acknowledged abilities and learning, advancing such sentiments; when they see a man, of his knowledge of the nature of all governments, ‘and of his intimate acquaintance with our own free republican government, and of the rights and duties of the legislature; especially of their *right and duty to consider, to deliberate, and, according to their own judgment*, independently of executive pleasure, to decide on every public measure; when, I say, the people of Massachusetts see this, will they wonder if a *majority* in congress should be *overwhelmed by the authority of executive recommendations?* And had I not reason to be alarmed ‘at the dangerous extent of executive influence,’ which to me appeared to be leading the public mind, by its blind confidence, to public ruin?’”

The reader has now the whole of what was written and published concerning J. Q. Adams, in my correspondence with governor Sullivan; and it is to this that president Adams refers, when, after a page of virulent abuse, he says, “He [Pickering] broke out at last ‘in a rage, and threw a firebrand into our Massachusetts legislature ‘against his colleague. The stubble was dry, and the flame easily ‘took hold.’”* Mr. Adams, accustomed to let loose his violent passions, mistakes the rage burning in his own breast, for a flame which he fancies that he sees lighted up in the bosom of the person he is intemperately reviling.

In a preceding letter (XIV) dated Nov. 7, 1808, Mr. Adams has been pleased to describe me in the following words: “The gentleman has wreaked his revenge on my son, in letters which shew ‘the character of the man bitter and malignant, ignorant and jesuitical. His revenge has been sweet, and he has rolled it as a ‘delicious morsel under his tongue.’” To this reproach I disdain to offer a contradiction. If the reader can find any ground for it,

* Letter XVII, to Cunningham.

in the foregoing extracts from my last letter to governor Sullivan (for, as I have said already, it was in that letter only that I named or alluded to his son) then let the reproach fasten upon me.

Here is the source of the father's wrath. In my correspondence with governor Sullivan, I was constrained to state, in the manner before mentioned, a fact which occurred in the senate of the United States, in order to justify my own vote against the embargo, contrary to the vote of my colleague, J. Q. Adams, on the same question. Of the character of that fact, every reader will judge. I have given my own sense of it. If the fact was honourable to his son, why should the father's wrath be kindled against me for stating it? That it has been kindled, and into a flame, his whole correspondence with Cunningham affords demonstrative proof. What is the obvious inference? That, in his opinion, the fact recited was dishonourable to his son.

In his letter to Mr. Otis, Mr. J. Q. Adams intimates a reproach to me for spending my time, when a senator, in writing the letter to governor Sullivan; while he was assiduously devoted to his senatorial duties. But where was his regard to his duty as a legislator for the Union, in advocating and voting for a law which paralysed all the business of the nation; when, by his own admission, it had only four ciphers for its basis? Where was his attention to the rights and interests of his constituents of Massachusetts, when his utmost exertions were made to impose that law upon them? a law *deceptively* called an *Embargo*; which is a measure sometimes adopted for an important national object, of a temporary nature: but the law in question was without limitation. The law was *general* in its terms, interdicting our commerce with all nations: it would not have been convenient to discriminate: but, accurately speaking, its title should have been--an act 'to prohibit all commerce with Great Britain and her dominions.' Whether J. Q. Adams really *performed his duty* in thus advocating and voting for the embargo—or *abandoned it*; whether he *guarded* the interests of his constituents of Massachusetts, or *betrayed* them, the reader can now form a pretty correct opinion: but if he will accompany me as I proceed, he will see the latter completely established.

I proceed with the embargo; though I fear the reader will be as weary of the details concerning it, as the people of the United States were of the embargo itself, when they threw the intolerable load from their shoulders. I pray for the reader's patience a little longer.

My first letter to governor Sullivan, giving an account of the embargo—exposing it stripped of the disguise which concealed its deformity—was opening the eyes of the people, to see the delusion practised upon them. The administration stood in need of justification; and J. Q. Adams stepped forth as its champion. *The zeal of new converts is proverbial.* The justification was in the form of a letter, addressed, nominally, to Harrison Gray Otis. In this letter,

Mr. Adams took new ground on which to rest the embargo ; the British orders in council, of the 11th of November 1807—issued to retaliate the French emperor's Berlin decree. As the latter interdicted the commerce of neutral nations with the British Islands—which in its execution was extended to all the British dominions—its object, as already observed, being to ruin the commerce of Britain, as an essential source of that revenue which enabled her to contend successfully with France ; so the orders in council interdicted the commerce of neutrals with France and her allies and their dependencies, and with all other countries, under the control of France, whose ports were shut against British commerce ; with the exception, however, of a direct trade between neutral nations and the colonies of the enemies of Great Britain. Mr. Adams describes these orders as “studiously concealed until the moment “when they *burst upon our heads.*” Whereas our government was apprised, by the British secretary of state (lord Howick) soon after the Berlin decree was issued, that measures of retaliation would be necessary on the part of Great Britain. The first was a prohibition of the coasting trade carried on by neutral vessels, from one port to another of France and her allies ; and notice thereof was immediately given to our minister in London. This was on the 10th of January 1807. But the French emperor continuing his Berlin decree, and in September, in that year, directing its execution, without any exception of the nations affected by it, the British government, having waited almost a year, and no neutral nation having offered any efficient interposition to obtain a repeal of the Berlin decree, made and proclaimed the retaliating orders in council of November 11th, 1807.

Perhaps it may be asked, How could any of the nations then neutral, the United States for instance, the principal neutral power, interpose, with *effect*, to obtain a revocation of the Berlin decree ? The answer is obvious. That decree was such a monstrous stride in imperial tyranny, so atrocious a violation of our treaty with France (a treaty made with Bonaparte himself when first consul) such an outrage on the law of nations, that all commerce with that country, and with her allies and dependencies, might have been prohibited, and the prohibition effectually enforced ; while our commerce would have been protected against the small naval power of France. The American navy, with the requisite increase then in our power, would soon have been completely competent to that object : not Mr. Jefferson's contemptible gun-boat system ; the expenditures on which were enough to have built a squadron of frigates. And had he possessed any portion of the spirit manifested by president Adams and the congress of 1798, such a resistance would have been made.* But nothing was more remote from Mr. Jefferson's policy than such resistance ; while it was the only mea-

* To protect our commerce in 1798, all commerce with France and her dominions was prohibited. Our armed vessels were instructed to capture all French

sure which could have had a tendency to effect a revocation of the decree. Or, if the pride and obstinacy of the emperor should have caused him to persevere, at least our commerce would have been protected. Whereas the timid subserviency of our government naturally invited the emperor to persist in his scheme of universal plunder. And the delusive hopes which the actual conduct of our government excited among the people, enticed them to hazard their property on the seas, and even to enter the ports of France and her allies; thus rushing into the mouths of the sharks which the decrees of Bonaparte had opened to devour them.

The British orders in council, of which every body has heard, were not, like French decrees, put in instant execution, "without a 'moment's warning;" they were not "pounced" upon all neutral commerce. Time was allowed for neutrals to receive information of them, before their vessels would be subjected to their operation. These were the orders which J. Q. Adams has said "stood in front "of the real causes of the embargo." "To argue (said he) upon "the subject of our disputes with Great Britain, or upon the motives "of the embargo, and keep them out of sight, is like laying your finger "over the *unit* before a series of *naughts*, and then arithmetically "proving that they all amount to nothing." Now I will show that when the embargo was recommended, and when the bill passed in the senate, those orders in council were, in fact, out of sight of the president—out of sight of the secretary of state—out of sight of the senate—and out of sight of Mr. Adams himself.

1. Mr. Jefferson, together with his message recommending an embargo, sent to congress the four papers I have already described; saying, that *those papers* showed the great and increasing dangers to our vessels, our seamen and merchandise; against which he expected the wisdom of congress would provide. And, far from placing the orders in council in *front* of the causes for the embargo, there is not the slightest reason to believe that he thought of their existence. On the contrary, forty-six days afterwards, viz. in his message to congress, of February 2, 1808,* laying before them the orders in council, he says. "I transmit them to congress as a *further* "proof of the increasing dangers to our navigation and commerce, "which led to the provident measure of the act of the present ses- "sion, laying an embargo on our own vessels."

2. Mr. Madison, in his letter of December 23, 1807†—the day after the embargo law was enacted—to William Pinkney, our minister in London, says, "I enclose you a copy of a message from "the president to congress, and their act in pursuance of it, laying "an immediate embargo on our vessels and exports. The *policy*

armed vessels. Our merchant vessels were permitted to arm in their own defence. Vigorous measures were adopted to increase our vessels of war. And all our treaties with France, grossly violated by her, were declared void.

* State Papers, vol. 1806-8, p. 263.

† State Papers, vol. 1808-9, p. 260.

“ and the *causes* of the measure are explained in the message itself.” But Mr. Madison, like Mr. Adams, was afterwards willing to drag in the orders in council to bolster up that mischievous measure. Accordingly, in his next letter to Mr. Pinkney, dated Feb. 19, 1803, Mr. Madison says, “ My last, which was committed to the British “ packet, enclosed a copy of the act of embargo, and explained “ the *policy* of the measure;” leaving out “ causes.” More cautious, however, than Mr. Adams, *or having a better memory*, he does not venture to assign the orders in council as a *cause* of the embargo; much less to place them “ in front of the real causes of the embargo;” but contents himself with saying, that “ among the considerations which *enforced* it, was the probability of such decrees as “ were issued by the British government on the 11th of November; “ the language of the British gazettes, with other indications, having left little doubt that such were meditated.” But these were *after thoughts*, the expression of which does no honour to Mr. Madison; as they bear an *insinuation* that those *rumours* of British orders were among the *motives* which influenced the president to recommend an embargo; which he knew was not the case.

3. I have said, that as to J. Q. Adams himself, the orders in council were out of sight, when he zealously advocated and voted for the embargo. This is a plain inference from the facts I have already stated. When hard pressed for adequate causes for the embargo, and not finding them in the four documents communicated with the message, Mr. Adams, it will be recollectcd, had recourse to the president’s *highly responsible recommendation* of the measure, and the *possible information* locked up in his bosom, to justify the passage of the law. Now, if the orders in council furnished the great and prominent cause for the embargo, and if, compared with them, the four papers assigned by the president as the only causes for an embargo were but four “ *naughts*;” is it possible that “ those all-devouring instruments of rapine,” as Mr. Adams calls the orders in council, should never have risen in their terrific forms to his view? that he should not have so presented them to the view of the senate? and that they should not have caused him to pour forth a deluge of his appalling metaphors, in describing them? I hesitate not to pronounce it impossible. “ Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Should he assert the contrary, no man of common understanding can believe him. At all events, it is clear, from the president’s first message and documents, and from the quotations already made from his next message, and from Mr. Madison’s letters, that neither Mr. Jefferson nor he had the orders in council in their minds, when assigning and mentioning the causes of the embargo.

4. It is equally clear, that no other senator, in voting for the embargo, contemplated the orders in council, because no one adverted to them in the discussion.

I now consider it as demonstrated, that Mr. Jefferson’s embargo

was not recommended by him, "to keep in safety our vessels, our "seamen and our merchandise." And as no man who thinks at all does any act of consequence without a motive, and as I am incapable of discerning any other, I do not hesitate to say, that its object was *a co-operation with the French emperor, to diminish, and as far as possible to destroy, the commerce of Great Britain; and thereby compel her at least to make peace, if not absolutely to subject her to the controul of the imperial conqueror; when it was apparent that the object of his ambition was universal empire.* I add, that the mischievous measure I have been exposing was not an *embargo*, but an *absolute prohibition of commerce*, and therefore a *violation of the constitution*: for the power given to congress to *regulate*, cannot be construed to authorize the *annihilation* of commerce: but such was the nature, and such would have been the effect, of this perpetual law—perpetual in its terms—if the people of the United States had tamely continued to submit to it. But they would not submit; and congress were obliged to repeal it. The commercial part of our nation considered the Berlin decree, and the still more outrageous one issued at Milan, with the British orders in council, superadded, as less injurious than Mr. Jefferson's edict called an *embargo: and all those decrees and orders continued in force when the embargo law was repealed.*

I have but one more fact to state on this subject: it is this—that on his first hearing the news of the *embargo*, *president Adams earnestly condemned it.* But he did not then know that his son had voted for it, and was its most strenuous advocate: that son, of whom he said, there was not an *honester or abler man in the United States.** When afterwards he learned what a conspicuous part his son had acted in favour of the *embargo*, he also thought it a wise measure. He even doubted whether it ought to have been limited! He says, "The policy of a limitation to the *embargo* is, in a national view, and on a large scale, a nice question."† That a man of his strong understanding, extensive knowledge, and great experience, *when judging with an unbiassed mind*, should have condemned the *embargo*—especially an *embargo of unlimited duration*—was perfectly natural; and, but for the agency of his son J. Q. Adams

* Letter to Cunningham, No. XLIII, dated July 31, 1809. J. Q. Adams was then on the point of departure from Boston, bound to Russia, as minister plenipotentiary from the United States. "I hope," says the father, "his absence will not be long. *Aristides is banished because he is too just. HE WILL NOT LEAVE AN HONESTER OR ABLER MAN BEHIND HIM.*" Here is a singular confusion of ideas. To the inclement region of Siberia in Russia, her despots have been accustomed to banish offending subjects. Aristides the just was *driven* into banishment by the votes of his fickle fellow citizens. J. Q. Adams *voluntarily accepted* of the mission to Russia. It was his first reward for abandoning the cause of federalism, and his father's and his own original principles. He perceived "there was no getting "along, or being any thing, without popularity;" and the path to popularity was that opened by Mr. Jefferson—then the idol of the people: his measures must be supported.

† Letter X, to Cunningham, p. 29.

.in imposing it, and his continuing joined to the dominant party, he would never have ceased to condemn it. Then, too, I might have been exempted from his calumnies: for it was my involuntary exhibition of his son's conduct about the embargo, that kindled the father's wrath against me; which, in the effervescence of his foaming passions, threw up that foul scum which is spread over all his letters where my name is mentioned.

The immense importance ascribed by Mr. Adams to his son, John Quincy, induces me to state—that, having received a law education, he commenced the practice of it in Boston; but soon (in 1794) when his father was vice-president, he was appointed minister resident of the United States to the States of Holland. His father places this first step in diplomacy to the account of Washington's gratitude for the son's rescuing the government from the overwhelming flood of democratic fanaticism, raised in the preceding year by the influence or proceedings of Monsieur Genet, minister from the French republic. “John Quincy Adams's writings (says ‘his father) first turned this tide.”—“Not all Washington's ministers, Hamilton and Pickering included, could have written those “papers, *which were so fatal to Genet*. Washington saw it, and felt “his obligations.”*

Mr. Adams's overweening opinion of his son's talents, and his raging enmity to others, makes him forget and confound times and facts. I had then nothing to do with the cabinet. The general post-office was my department. But Mr. Jefferson was at that time (1793) secretary of state; and he has always been reputed to possess certain talents, some knowledge of public law and of foreign affairs, and a familiar acquaintance with the rights and duties of ministers; having himself been minister from the United States to the court of France, from the year 1785 to 1789. And being secretary of state, it was his special duty to enter the lists with Mr. Genet; but he shrunk, it seems, from the fearful task. Alexander Hamilton, too, then secretary of the treasury, was believed to be a man of understanding, with a capacity to manifest its strength on paper. Even at the age of eighteen, he encountered successfully the most powerful tory advocates of British taxation. But what of all this? Mr. Adams represents Alexander Hamilton at one time as not possessing a particle of common sense; at another, as an ignoramus; and that, in a certain conversation with him, “he “talked like a fool;” and at length sinks him even below Elbridge Gerry! Yes—Elbridge Gerry was Alexander Hamilton's master in finance!†

In this state of terror and dismay, when all Washington's ministers trembled at the sight of the French Leviathan, forth stepped a youthful champion, son of the venerable sage of Quincy, and (like

* Letter XII, dated Oct. 15, 1803, to Cunningham.

† See Mr. Adams's Letter, No. XIII, May 29, 1809, published in the Boston Patriot; an extract from which will be inserted in the section concerning Hamilton.

the stripling son of Jesse who slew the Philistine giant) “put a hook in his nose.”

It will be impossible to doubt of the persuasive motives that influenced John Q. Adams to desert the cause, policy and principles of federalists, and join himself to their adversaries. In addition to what I have already stated, look at the following facts.

In a little more than a year after turning out as the champion for the embargo, to wit, on the 4th of March 1809, Mr. Madison (it being the first day of his presidency) nominated J. Q. Adams minister plenipotentiary to the court of the emperor of Russia. The senate put their negative on the nomination. But Mr. Madison, having called a special meeting of congress in the following May, repeated the nomination; and, by a change in some votes, the nomination was approved. Mr. Adams was next appointed minister plenipotentiary to the court of London; then one of the commissioners for negotiating a peace with Great Britain; and, in the last place, secretary of state. There is but one more step in the ladder of ambition; and there are not wanting partisans to aid him in the ascent—so far as perpetual eulogies can give him aid. His abilities and learning have been highly extolled. His father possessed the same qualifications. But something more is requisite in the character of a safe and useful president. Whose passions, of the two, are the most violent, it may be difficult to decide. Those of the son may, perhaps, be managed with the most discretion: from the father’s errors he may have learned some degree of caution. But his review of the works of Fisher Ames, one of the most able, excellent and amiable of men—and his last fourth of July oration—exhibit a temper which no candid, liberal and honourable mind would indulge. In both are manifested a rancour alike unbecoming a gentleman, a statesman and a Christian. Of what value are *professions*, without the *spirit*, of Christianity? In vain will you search for this spirit in the conduct of either father or son. In what part of the gospel did the latter find a warrant for *him* to throw the bolts of Heaven? Where, to authorize *him* to interpret the events of Providence as the special judicial acts of the Deity applied to individual sufferers? In his oration, he has the boldness to ascribe the insanity of George the Third to the judgment of Heaven: to consider his insanity—the most deplorable malady incident to suffering humanity; an affliction, the bare idea of which would melt any but the most obdurate heart—as a punishment inflicted by God, for the evils experienced by the colonies in his reign, from the oppressive acts of parliament, and the consequent American war. “Suppose ye that those Galileans (whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices) were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay:”—“Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay.” These words have

an authority which J. Q. Adams will not controvert. His father, more placable, has expressed his belief, that George the Third "was "not a tyrant in disposition and in nature;" but that he was "deceived by his courtiers on both sides of the Atlantic; and in his "official capacity only cruel."

Had J. Q. Adams been a private citizen, the sentiments in his oration, here adverted to, would have been a subject of just reproach: but, viewing him as *the secretary of state*—the officer of the government whose particular duty it was to hold a courteous and amicable intercourse with foreign nations with whom the United States were at peace—it was peculiarly indecorous thus to insult the memory of the deceased king. From his general reputation, if there was, at that period, a monarch in Europe, whose actions and whose life were regulated by moral principles, it was George the Third. Will it then be deemed a stretch of candour to suppose, that he verily thought himself bound by the duties of his station, as the head of the British empire, to preserve it entire?

On the score of talents and learning, the experience of five and thirty years, in the United States, has furnished ample proof, that *a practical knowledge of the interests of the country, and common sense deliberately exercised in forming a sound judgment, united with perfect integrity and pure and disinterested patriotism, are of infinitely greater value, than genius without stability, profound learning, ripe scholarship, and philosophy;—the latter often wasting its energies in visionary theories and political dreams.*

SECTION III.

THE CAUSES, PRETENDED AND REAL, FOR REMOVING T. PICKERING FROM OFFICE—THE MISSION TO FRANCE IN 1799—THE PARDON OF FRIES.

It appears to have been a material object of Mr. Adams, in his correspondence with Cunningham, where he labours to justify his dismissing me from the office of secretary of state, to show that I did not possess the qualifications necessary to perform the duties of it. This reproach from him should have been spared, when he knew what I had written and published in Boston above five months before the date of his letter to Cunningham, No. XII, the first in which he introduces my name. Mr. Adams had certainly read that publication; for it is the same in which I recited to governor Sullivan J. Q. Adams's extraordinary sentiment in the embargo question, which I have already stated. Mr. Cunningham (letter No. XI) asks the cause of my dismission; which (says he) "I have "never seen unfolded, and which col. Pickering has nearly pro- "nounced inexplicable;" referring to my last printed letter to governor Sullivan, which is dated April 22, 1803. The principal

object of that letter was, my vindication against many aspersions on my character. The urgent motives to undertake that vindication are expressed in the following paragraph of the same letter:

"I am now, sir, far advanced in life. I have children and grand-children, who, when I am gone, may hear these slanders repeated, and not have the means of repelling them. I have, too, some invaluable friends in most of the states, and many in that which gave me birth; men who are the ornaments of society and of their country. All these, if not my country itself, interested as it is in the public concerns on which I first addressed you [the embargo] have claims which I ought not to leave unsatisfied. Thus called upon to vindicate my character, I am constrained to give a concise narrative of my public life."

I shall not trouble the reader with long details. It may suffice to say, That early in 1768, when a marked line was drawn between whigs and tories (the party names of that day) I acted with the former in all the measures of my countrymen, in opposition to British taxation of the colonies—that in my native town I was a member of the various committees raised in that period, to support that opposition; and that on me devolved all the writing which occasions called for:—That, prior to the war which ensued, I was elected by the freeholders of my native county, Essex, register of deeds—that, after the commencement of hostilities, when Massachusetts organized a provisional government, I was appointed a judge of the county court of common pleas; and sole judge of the maritime court, to take cognizance of prize causes, pursuant to the resolutions of congress, for the middle district of Massachusetts, comprehending Boston, Marblehead, Salem, and other ports in Essex. Into these places were brought most of the prizes taken by the armed vessels of Massachusetts. The number of those prizes, while I held the office (which was until I joined the army under general Washington's immediate command) amounted to about one hundred and fifty. In the autumn of 1776, the army being greatly reduced, by the expiration of enlistments, and likely soon to be nearly dissolved, there was a call on Massachusetts for many thousands of her militia. I marched a regiment of seven hundred men from Essex. The tour of duty terminated in New-Jersey, in March 1777. General Washington's head quarters were at Morristown. Some time after my return home, I received from the general an invitation to take the office of adjutant general. In that capacity, I joined the army at Middlebrook about the middle of the month of June. In September happened the battle of Brandywine. Five days afterwards another general action was expected; but, rain coming on, the enemy halted; and, after some skirmishes between the advanced parties, the American army retired. In October the battle of Germantown took place. After the capture of Burgoyne's army, general Washington, reinforced by some brigades from the northern army, took an advantageous position at Whitemarsh, four-

teen miles from Philadelphia. In the beginning of December, sir William Howe led his army from Philadelphia to Chesnut Hill, about three miles from the American army, and on the morning of the third day afterwards advanced, with his whole force, apparently with the expectation, or hope, of drawing Washington from his advantageous position. The advanced parties, and Morgan's rifle regiment, engaged the British advanced parties. Washington retaining his station on the hills, Howe returned to Philadelphia. The American army then marched to Valley Forge, on the western side of the river Schuylkill, and huddled for the winter.

Some two or three months before, congress had constituted a board of war. I was appointed one of its members; and took my seat there as soon as a successor in the office of adjutant general was appointed, being the last of January, 1778. Judge Peters was a member of the board, and we were joined by generals Gates and Mifflin: but these two left the board not long afterwards, and the business of it rested chiefly on Mr. Peters and myself. I continued in this station until the summer of 1780, when general Greene resigned the office of quarter master general. Very unexpeetedly, that office was proposed to me, and by Roger Sherman, then a member of congress; a man whose name, in the annals of his country, will descend to posterity among the names of her eminent patriots and statesmen. Having taken a little time to consider the proposition, I informed him that I would accept the office, should it please congress to confer it. It was an arduous undertaking, and the more embarrassing because continental paper money was so depreciated as to be hardly worth counting; and congress had no other funds. Having accepted the office, I addressed a letter to congress, proposing the expedient of authorizing me to value all services and supplies, in the department, as if to be paid for in specie, and to give certificates therefor, bearing an interest of six per cent. This measure was adopted; and with the aid of these certificates the business of the department, which under the new regulations extended to all the states, was carried on, until that eminent citizen, Robert Morris, appointed superintendent of finance, by his personal credit, furnished, in his own promissory notes (which foreign loans enabled him to redeem) a medium which passed as cash. I continued in the office of quarter master general to the end of the war.

In the year 1791, president Washington appointed me postmaster general. At the close of the year 1794, general Knox resigned the office of secretary of war, and Washington appointed me his successor. In August, 1795, on the resignation of Edmund Randolph, secretary of state, Washington charged me with the business of that department. Some time before the meeting of congress, which was in December following, the president tendered to me the office of secretary of state: at the same time he frankly told me the names of three highly distinguished citizens, to whom he had offered, but

who declined accepting, the office. General Washington knew me well, and that I had not enough of vanity or ambition to be wounded or humbled at the preference given to those gentlemen; they were entitled to it: I only regretted that they declined the office. For myself, I objected, that the duties of the department of state were foreign to my former pursuits in life, and that I thought myself unequal to the proper discharge of them. He desired me to take the matter into consideration. When he again spoke to me on the subject, I observed, that although the gentlemen he had named to me had declined the office, yet by a little delay he might find some other candidate to fill it. The session of congress was approaching; by inquiry among the members he might obtain information of a fit character not then occurring to him; and I requested him to postpone the matter until the meeting of congress. The president acquiesced. But as soon as congress assembled—without speaking to me again—he nominated me to be secretary of state; and the senate approved the nomination.

Now all these important offices, in the general government, were voluntarily conferred upon me; the last, and highest, attended by the singular circumstances I have just stated; and all of them unasked for, in any form whatever. Yet Mr. Adams says, *Pickering was ambitious!* Had I solicited these offices—had I made an interest through my friends, or *intrigued with my enemies*, to obtain them—had I swelled with vanity on their acquisition—I might have been pronounced ambitious. The following are Mr. Adams's words:—"Under the simple appearance of a bald head and straight hair, and under professions of profound republicanism, he conceals an ardent ambition, envious of every superior, and impatient of obscurity!"*

My "bald head and straight hair" are what nature has given me; and I have been content with her arrangements: they are not a fit subject for reproach. Mr. Adams's friend Cunningham reminds him, that it was rather unfortunate for him to attempt to degrade Hamilton, by calling him "the little man;" seeing, though with less flesh, he surpassed in stature both him and his son. Of all men living, those who best know me will say, that I am one of the last to whom a disposition in any manner to disguise his sentiments should be imputed.

Having seen, throughout the "Correspondence," a series of misrepresentations of comparatively recent events, it cannot surprise one that Mr. Adams should misstate an occurrence fifty or sixty years old. He says, that he was engaged in a cause in which my father was a witness; that "while under examination, though treated with the utmost respect and civility, he broke out, without the smallest provocation, into a rude personal attack upon him," Mr. Adams. I know my father's character too well to give any credit

* Letter XVII, p. 56.

to the latter part of this tale. He was a farmer ; yet, bred in the town, his manners were not coarse and rude. It is true that he thought all men were born free and equal ; and, though indisposed to any act of humiliation to a proud barrister, he would treat his poor neighbour with kindness and civility. The story admits of an easy solution. It was, I presume, a cross-examination ; and that my father's testimony bore hard upon the cause of Mr. Adams's client. Then, as it not unfrequently happens (and I have often thought with too much indulgence from the court) the lawyer brow-beat the witness, with the hope to confound him, in order, amidst his confusion, to produce some change in his language that might lessen or destroy the weight of his testimony. Such, probably, was Mr. Adams's conduct towards my father ; who had discernment enough to perceive the insult, and spirit enough not to let it pass unnoticed. In commenting upon the testimony, in his argument to the jury, Mr. Adams says he raised a general laugh at my father's expense. He supposes that I was present ; and says I "have never forgiven "him." Now, whether this miserable tale be true in whole, or in part, or wholly destitute of truth, it is, as to the conclusion, altogether immaterial ; for I never heard of it before, nor do I remember a single instance in which my father was examined as a witness in any court. There was, consequently, no object on account of which, in regard to Mr. Adams, I could impart or withhold forgiveness. My father, at the age of 75, died almost six and forty years ago.

I have mentioned one cause of Mr. Adams's virulent reproaches in giving an account of Mr. Jefferson's embargo. I shall now mention another. His friend Cunningham desires to be informed by Mr. Adams of the causes of his dismissing me from office.* He eagerly seized the occasion to vent his resentments, while he gratified the extreme curiosity of his friend.

In his first answer,† Mr. Adams says, "Cæsar's wife must not be "suspected, was all the reason he gave for repudiating her." [On this reason I make but a single remark—that the familiarity of this same *delicate* Cæsar, with the other sex, was so notorious, that he was stigmatised as the husband of every woman in Rome.] Mr. Adams proceeds—"Reasons of state are not always to be submitted to "newspaper discussions. It is sufficient for me to say, that I had "reasons enough, not only to satisfy me, but to make it my indis- "pensable duty : reasons which, upon the coolest deliberation, I "still approve. I was not so ignorant of Mr. Pickering, his family "relations, his political, military and local connexions, as not to be "well aware of the consequences to myself. I said at the time, to "a few confidential friends, that I signed my own dismission when "I signed his, and that he would rise again, but I should fall for- "ever." [This, I doubt not (the reader will pardon the apparent

* Letter XI, dated Oct. 5, 1808.

† Letter XII, Oct. 15, 1808.

solecism) was a *prediction after the event*. Mr. Adams, when he wrote this letter, forgot the date of his prophecy.] "His removal was "one of the most deliberate, virtuous and disinterested actions of my "life."

On this part of the answer, I must pray the reader to pause for a moment. That there were, in his own views, "reasons of "state," I am ready to admit: what they were will by-and-by appear. But his prediction, that for "one of the most deliberate, "virtuous and disinterested actions of his life," "*he* should fall for "ever," while *I*, the subject of that act, "should rise again," appears, among intelligent and virtuous people, really enigmatical. Incapable, as he represents me, on what ground could Mr. Adams predict that I should rise again? Never in my life did I court popularity, the usual road to honours and employments. Yet I have had many excellent friends, whose approbation has infinitely more than countervailed all the obloquy of which I have been the subject.

Mr. Adams proceeds—"If any future historian should have access to the letter books of the secretaries of state, and compare "Mr. Pickering's negotiations with England, with those of Mr. "Marshall, he will see reasons enough for the exchange of ministers."

Be it so: but the actual comparison was out of the question when I was removed, *my letters only* being on the books; and Mr. Adams saw very few of them; as he usually passed half the year, enjoying *otium cum dignitate*, at Quincy; and during the sessions of congress he never called for a letter book to read one of them. However, he might very well calculate on the superiority to which he refers, as Mr. Marshall's distinguished talents were well known; and perhaps no one entertains a higher opinion of them than I do. Since we were personally known to each other, I have been happy in receiving uniform testimonies of his friendship and esteem. His elevated and generous mind will derive no pleasure from this contrast.

Mr. Adams again. "In consequence of Mr. Pickering's removal, "I was enabled to negotiate and complete a peace with France, and "an amicable settlement with England."

I do not know what settlement with England he refers to. The difficult question about impressment of seamen was not *then* adjusted; nor in the two next succeeding administrations; though in the latter of them it was one of the *professed* objects of a three years' war, vastly expensive in money and in human lives: nor is it settled to this day. There was another subject of dispute with England—the debts incurred by Americans prior to the revolutionary war, and remaining due to British merchants. What negotiations, in this case, were carried on by Mr. Marshall and the British government, I do not know; yet I am sure, that, on the part of Mr. Marshall, they must have been ably conducted: but, nevertheless,

they did not effect an "amicable settlement," as Mr. Adams asserts, nor any settlement at all, unless it was, that the two parties, unable to agree on terms, mutually consented *to let the matter rest*; for an actual settlement was not made until January 1802, near the close of the first year of Mr. Jefferson's presidency, by a convention negotiated in London, by Rufus King the American minister, and the British secretary of state. This was a compromise about the British debts. It was agreed, as I have already stated, that the United States should pay to his Britannic majesty six hundred thousand pounds sterling (\$2,664,000) for the use of his subjects, creditors to the American ante-revolution debtors, in discharge of those creditors' claims. That he was enabled to make peace with France, *in consequence of my removal*, is not true. The commissioners, Ellsworth and Davie, furnished with full and minute instructions, sailed for France six months before my removal; and my being in or out of office was a matter of perfect indifference in the negotiations, and in their result.

Having so far gratified Cunningham's eager appetite for secret history, he takes care to keep up the excitement, by saying, near the close of this letter, "But I am not yet to reveal the whole mystery." Accordingly, in the next letter, No. XIII, Cunningham renews his importunity "to be initiated into the whole mystery," relating to me.

In his next letter (No. XIV) Mr. Adams adds to the former subjects of negotiation, "discussions of great importance with Spain," as well as with France and England. On the discussions with Spain, I can speak with some certainty, having seen Mr. Marshall's letters to col. Humphreys, our minister at Madrid. They were few in number, and treated of the spoliations of our commerce, by the privateers of France and Spain. By both, the captured vessels were carried into the ports of Spain, and there generally condemned, in violation of every law that is held in respect by civilized nations. The case was too plain to require the abilities of Mr. Marshall to discuss it. The chief clerk whom I left in the department of state, and whom Mr. Marshall retained, was quite competent to that task. The Spanish government was at that time *but partially independent*. French consuls in her ports erected themselves into tribunals taking cognizance of prize causes. The captures made by Spanish armed vessels, and unlawfully condemned in Spanish courts, were the subject of a treaty afterwards negotiated by Mr. Jefferson's minister to Spain, Charles Pinckney; in which the Spanish government stipulated to make compensation for all which, on due investigation, should be found in that predicament. But the senate, to whom this treaty was submitted, did not (under an influence easy to divine) advise its ratification. At the next session of congress, the same treaty was again submitted to the senate, who then advised its ratification. But it was too late; the Spanish government now refused to ratify. It was rejected by our

own government, in the first instance, because the illegal captures and condemnations, by *French armed vessels*, and the *French consular tribunals*, were not comprehended, and stipulated to be paid for by *Spain*. She was in fact under *duress* from the French Republic, under whose authority, or efficacious countenance, the French consular tribunals were erected. On these three subjects of negotiation, Mr. Adams says, "I could get nothing done as I would have it. My new minister, Marshall, did all, to my entire satisfaction."

Mr. Adams was a lawyer, a statesman, a diplomatist, of great experience; and from his abundant resources, ready at his call, it would not be unnatural, or unreasonable, to expect, that, having *endured* his *lame* secretary so long, he might be willing to lend him some aid—to suggest at least some leading ideas on the subjects in question: but of these he was certainly very sparing, if he offered any at all. As soon as a session of congress ended, he hurried away to Quincy, to indulge himself in repose, almost free from the cares of government, and enjoying his office, with its emoluments, nearly as a *sinecure*. At the close of the very important session in July 1798, he posted off without informing any head of department that he was going to leave the seat of government! His son-in-law, Col. Smith, nominated for adjutant general, had recently been negatived by the senate; and I supposed he departed in a pet. Much in this manner he left the city of Washington, early on the morning of the fourth of March 1801, the day of the inauguration of his successful rival, Thomas Jefferson; vexed and mortified that he was not himself elected to the presidency a second time. Washington stayed in Philadelphia, and, with dignified courtesy, attended the inauguration of Mr. Adams; and afterwards made him a visit at his lodgings, before he departed for Mount Vernon.

So much on the score of *incapacity*, with which I am roundly charged by Mr. Adams. With this, however, great as it may have been, it was somewhat cruel to upbraid me, after what had passed between president Washington and me, when he tendered me the office of secretary of state, as recited in my letter to governor Sullivan; which Mr. Adams had read, and which, as already mentioned, caused the out-pouring of his wrath; and after I had held the office a year and a half under Washington, and three years and two months under Adams himself.

If the reader will have the goodness to accompany me, we will now look on the other side of the question.

Mr. Adams having advanced far in gratifying Cunningham's inquiry concerning my dismission, the itching curiosity of the latter prompts him to solicit further information. "I wish," says he, "my 'suspicions were obviated or confirmed, that his (Pickering's) far-famed report to congress, on our foreign relations, was not his own 'unassisted performance.'" There were two reports relating to France. To the first Mr. Cunningham must refer. It was in the

form of a letter, of great length, dated the 16th of January 1797, addressed to general Pinckney, the American minister at Paris; a copy of which, on the 19th of that month, was communicated by Washington to congress; by whose order it was printed. It made a pamphlet of a hundred pages. Mr. Adams had satisfactory reasons to know, that it was my own composition; but he carefully avoided answering Cunningham's importunate desire of information on this point; it would have presented a contradiction to his numerous vilifying reproaches. This report was the result of a thorough and laborious investigation, which enabled me to conclude with the following inferences:

"From the foregoing statement we trust it will appear, That "there has been no attempt in the government of the United States "to violate our treaty, or weaken our engagements, with France: "That whatever resistance it has opposed to the measures of her "agents, the maintenance of the laws and sovereignty of the United "States, and their neutral obligations, rendered indispensable: "That it has never acquiesced in any acts violating our rights, or "interfering with the advantages stipulated to France; but, on the "contrary, has opposed them by all the means in its power: That "it has withheld no succours from France, that were compatible "with the duties of neutrality to grant: That, as well by their inde- "pendent political rights, as by the express provisions of the com- "mercial treaty with France, the United States were at full liberty "to enter into commercial treaties with any other nation, and con- "sequently with Great Britain: That no facts manifesting a par- "tiality to that country have been, and I add, that none such can "be, produced.

"Of the propriety and justness of these conclusions, you will en- "deavour to satisfy the French government; and, conscious of the "rectitude of our own proceedings, during the whole course of the "present war, we cannot but entertain the most sanguine expecta- "tions that they will be satisfied. We even hope that this has been "already accomplished, and that you will be saved from the pain "of renewing a discussion, which the government has entered upon "with regret. Your mission and instructions prove its solicitude to "have prevented its necessity, and the sincerity of its present hopes, "that your endeavours, agreeably to those instructions, 'to remove "jealousies, and obviate complaints, by showing that they were "groundless—to restore confidence, so unfortunately and injurious- "ly impaired—to explain the relative interests of both countries, "and the real sentiments of your own,' have been attended with "success. And, as a consequence thereof, we rely on the repeal "of the decrees and orders, which expose our commerce to indefi- "nite injuries, which militate with the obligations of treaties, and "our rights as a neutral nation."

Of the nature and character of this letter to general Pinckney, I can desire no higher or better opinion than chief justice Marshall's.

In his Life of Washington, vol. v. p. 725, he gives the following account of it :

“ Early in the session (1797) the president communicated to congress, in a special message, the complaints alleged by the representative of the French republic against the government of the United States. These complaints embracing most of the transactions of the legislative and executive departments in relation to the belligerent powers, a particular and careful review of almost every act of the administration, which could affect those powers, became indispensable. The principal object for the mission of general Pinckney to Paris having been to make to the executive directory those full and fair explanations of the principles and conduct of the American government, which, by removing such prejudices and jealousies as were founded on misconception, might restore that harmony between the two republics which the president had at all times anxiously sought to preserve, this review was addressed to that minister. It presented a minute and comprehensive detail of all the points of controversy which had arisen between the two nations, and defended the measures which had been adopted in America, with a clearness and a strength of argument believed to be irresistible. To place the subject in a point of view admitting of no possible misunderstanding, the secretary of state had annexed to his own full and demonstrative reasoning, documents establishing the real fact in each particular case, and the correspondence relating to it.”

The other report I addressed to president Adams himself, on the 18th of January 1799, to be communicated to congress. On the 21st he made the communication, with the following message addressed to the two houses :

“ According to an intimation in my message of Friday last, I now lay before congress a report of the secretary of state, containing his observations on some of the documents which attended it.”

These documents consisted of a letter, dated June 25, 1798, from me to Mr. Gerry, then in Paris; of a very long letter from him to me, dated Oct. 1, 1798, at Nantasket road, the lower harbour of Boston, where he had just arrived from France; prepared, of course, on his voyage; and studiously framed, to put the best face possible on his transactions with the French minister Talleyrand, after his colleagues, Pinckney and Marshall, had been obliged to leave Paris; and of a mass of papers, numbered from one to thirty-five. To these I added two or three letters from Fulwar Skipwith, consul general of the United States at Paris, and some papers received by him from the French minister, after Mr. Gerry left that city. These were the documents referred to by Mr. Adams, in his message to congress, on which I made my report; which occupies a pamphlet of 45 pages, published by order of the house of representatives.

To understand perfectly, and justly to estimate, the conduct of the United States government, in relation to France, during the administrations of presidents Washington and Adams, one must read the correspondences between the department of state and the French ministers to the United States, Genet, Fauchet, and Adet; and the letters and reports of the secretaries of state, on the subjects in controversy between the two republics. This, perhaps, will hardly be undertaken by any one, excepting the historian who shall minutely investigate the public transactions of that period. Chief justice Marshall, when writing the Life of Washington, read, as he once told me, the immense mass of letters and papers left by him, in relation to all his public transactions, during the long periods in which he was engaged in the service of his country; and the reader has seen, in the extract from the Life of Washington, that all the acts of his administration, in relation to France, received, in the opinion of the chief justice, a complete vindication, in my letter of January 16th, 1797, to General Pinckney. My report to Mr. Adams, of January 18th, 1799, was intended, by an exhibition of the subsequent unjust, tyrannical and profligate conduct of the French government, to justify our own government in all its measures towards the French republic, whether in its attempts to conciliate by negotiation, or of armed defence against her wanton and outrageous hostilities. The examination of Mr. Gerry's budget of documents, which constituted the basis of that report, led me to remark, that the points, chiefly meriting attention, were the attempts of the French government,

1. To exculpate itself from the charge of corruption, as having demanded a *douceur* of fifty thousand pounds sterling (222,000 dollars) for the pockets of the directors and ministers of the republic, as represented in the despatches of our envoys:

2. To detach Mr. Gerry from his colleagues, and to inveigle him into a separate negotiation; and

3. Its design, if the negotiation failed, and a war should take place between the United States and France, to throw the blame of the rupture on the United States.

The report does not admit of an abridgment. I can introduce only its concluding observations, the result of my examination. They are these:—"The French government, by always abstaining "from making specific demands of damages—by refusing to receive our ministers—by at length proposing to negotiate, in a mode which it knew to be impracticable, with the person who had no powers, and who therefore constantly refused to negotiate, and thus wholly avoiding a negotiation—has kept open the field for complaints of wrongs and injuries, in order, by leaving them undefined, to furnish pretences for unlimited depredations. In this way it 'determined to *fleece us*:' in this way it gratified its *avarice* and *revenge*; and it hoped also to satiate its *ambition*. After a long series of insults unresented, and a patient endurance of in-

"juries aggravated in their nature and unexampled in their extent, "that government expected our final submission to its will. Our "resistance has excited its surprise, and as certainly increased its "resentment. With some soothing expressions, is heard the voice "of wounded pride. Warmly expressing its desire of reconciliation, it gives no evidence of its sincerity; but proofs in abundance "demonstrate that it is not sincere. From standing erect, and in "that commanding attitude requiring implicit obedience—cowering, "it renounces some of its unfounded demands. But I hope we "shall remember, 'that the tiger crouches, before he leaps upon his "prey.'"

Of the truth of this report—its conformity to facts—and the correctness of the inferences—Mr. Adams must at that time have been satisfied; or he would not have communicated it to congress. It is true he calls the report *the observations of the secretary of state*; but they were the secretary's observations after passing Mr. Adams's examination and *expurgation*; that is, after he had marked a number of sentences to be struck out, because they bore somewhat hardly on the conduct of his friend and favourite minister, Mr. Gerry; who, it must be confessed, appears as a principal actor, and the hero of the report. But, after this expurgation, all that remained must be considered as having his approbation. But it happens to be in my power to present the reader with the opinion of a perfectly competent and impartial judge. In searching among my papers, I have found the following letter from general (now chief justice) Marshall to me, which I trust he will excuse my presenting to the public, seeing it is material to my vindication from Mr. Adams's aspersions on this particular subject. Readers will be pleased to recollect, that general Marshall, having been one of the envoys to the French republic, with Mr. Gerry, was perfectly acquainted with the characters of the directory and their minister Talleyrand; and, comparing the management of this minister with Mr. Gerry with the occurrences under the direction of the same minister, during the six months that Marshall and Pinckney had stayed in Paris, was perfectly competent to form a correct judgment.

GENERAL MARSHALL'S LETTER TO T. PICKERING.

"Richmond, Feb. 19, '99.

"Dear Sir,—An occasional absence from Richmond suspended for some time my acknowledgment of the receipt of your *very correct* analysis and able commentary on the late negotiation with France. I wish it could be read more generally than I fear it will be.

"I am grieved rather than surprised at Mr. Gerry's letter. To my comprehension, the evidence, on which his judgment is formed, positively contradicts the opinion he has given us. From what facts he infers the pacific temper of the French government, I am unable to conjecture. That France is not desirous of immediate war with America, is obvious; that is, of *reciprocal war*—for she has been long making it on us; but, that any indications appear of a disposition for a solid accommodation, on terms such as America can accede to, is by no means to be admitted.

"It is strange that Mr. Gerry should state the negotiation to have been in a fair train when intelligence of the publication of the despatches arrived in Paris; while he represents Mr. Talleyrand as having declined entering on the proposed treaty, until he could know the temper of our government on the communications that had been made, which communications related chiefly to money; and while also he states Mr. Talleyrand to declare, that he had never approved of sending a minister to the United States. I am, &c.

J. MARSHALL."

Every reader acquainted with the character of general Marshall (and who in the United States, at all conversant in public affairs, is a stranger to it?) will be satisfied that my report, as communicated to congress by Mr. Adams himself, far from containing any thing exceptionable, merits approbation. Fortunately it is in my power to show, that the passages struck from the original draught are alike unexceptionable. These I have exhibited in the section on Elbridge Gerry, from a press copy found among my papers, with all the parts to be expunged, according to the president's direction, included between brackets. I am aware that these minute details may, at this day, excite little interest; and I would not invite attention to them, had they not been rendered important by Mr. Adams, in making my original report the basis of a malicious slander.

Every American who lived in the days of the French republic, particularly in the years 1796, 7, 8 and 9, or who, by a little reading, has become acquainted with the transactions of that period, will remember the familiar use of the letters X, Y and Z, in relation to those transactions. Those letters have often been repeated ludicrously, even as though they represented fictitious characters; whereas, in decyphering the voluminous despatches of our envoys, Pinckney, Marshall and Gerry, I substituted, for a reason to be herein after mentioned, those letters for the names of persons introduced to our envoys in Paris; whither they had been sent, and where they waited patiently for six months, for the purpose of effecting an amicable settlement of all differences between the United States and the French Republic; which differences, by the government of that republic, in the hands of a Five-Headed Executive, called the "Directory," were made the pretences for a scene of piracies, in kind never surpassed, in extent never equalled, by the barbarous Mahometan regencies of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli. On the arrival of our envoys at Paris, "cards of hospitality" were sent to them, to entitle them to stay there unmolested by the police. They delivered to Mr. Talleyrand,* minister for foreign affairs, copies of their letters of credence; and rightfully expected to be soon presented to the Directory, by its minister. But they were not presented—they were never admitted to the presence of that haughty and insolent executive. The arms of France had

* This is the same extraordinary personage who, under the title of Prince Talleyrand, made an important figure for some years under the Emperor Bonaparte, and since in the court of Louis the Eighteenth.

subjected Holland, Spain, Portugal, and the minor powers conveniently within their reach; and even Austria was compelled to make peace. All the subject nations were treated with little ceremony, and some with utter contempt; to which they submitted. The directory expected a like humble submission from the United States. In this they were encouraged by their knowledge of a powerful party, which from the beginning were opposed to the federal administration under Washington, and who persisted in their opposition during the continued federal administration of government under his successor Mr. Adams. Few, if any, important acts of the federal administrations, prior to the year 1799, escaped opposition from that party, of which Mr. Jefferson was the reputed, and undoubtedly the actual, head and oracle. This party vehemently opposed even the building of two or three frigates, which were necessary to protect our commerce from the Algerines! those frigates which were the commencement of that navy, which, in the late war having saved the administration from political perdition, has now become a favourite with the government, as well as with the people.

Instead of admitting our envoys to an audience with the directory, their minister, Mr. Talleyrand, employed certain agents to make overtures—to inform them of the temper of the directory towards the United States, as filled with resentment, on account of some expressions in president Adams's speech to congress, in which he noticed the offensive discrimination made by the French government between the people of the United States and their government, in the last public audience given to Mr. Monroe, minister from the United States, on his taking leave of the directory, in the year 1796.

The parts of the president's speech, with which the directory affected to be offended, regarded chiefly the speech of the president of the directory to Mr. Monroe. Mr. Adams said (and most truly) that it was marked with indignities towards the government of the United States. "It evinced," said he, "a disposition to separate "the people of the United States from their government; to per- "suade them that they have different affections, principles and in- "terests from those of their fellow-citizens whom they themselves "had chosen to manage their common concerns; and thus to pro- "duce divisions fatal to our peace." But not the government only was reproached; the whole people of the United States were insulted in the speech to Mr. Monroe: "They," (said the president Barras) "always proud of their liberty, *will never forget that they "owe it to France.*" A generous friend, who had conferred the greatest benefit, even at the hazard of life, on another, would never boast of it; much less would he tauntingly remind the latter of his obligations.

I have suggested, that the resentment of the Directory against

the American government was merely *affected*, for the purpose now to be explained.

Had there existed in the directory a particle of honesty or honour, and had there been any solid grounds for complaint against the United States, our envoys would have been at once admitted to an audience; commissioners would have been appointed to negotiate on all the topics of complaint; all differences would have been settled, and harmony and good will restored. But the French government had no just ground for even one of their complaints. Such was the opinion of well informed men at the time; and such, the reader has seen, was the deliberate opinion of the enlightened citizen, chief justice Marshall, formed several years afterwards, on an examination of all the public documents, aided by his own personal knowledge, relating to the subject.

Why then, was there such a loud and long continued clamour of the French government against the United States; especially against their government? I shall not attempt to enumerate all the causes. Those who conducted the affairs of France, doubtless, wished to involve the United States in the war commenced with England in 1793. But the president (Washington) after the most mature consultation with the members of the administration, consisting of Jefferson, Hamilton, Knox and Randolph, determined that it was the right, as well as the interest, of the United States, to remain at peace; and, in pursuance of this determination, he issued his proclamation of neutrality, and enjoined upon the citizens of the United States an observance of all the duties of neutrality. The exactness with which the executive endeavoured to secure and enforce their observance offended the government of France.

Having a serious controversy with Great Britain on subjects arising out of the existing war, as well as claims of vast importance resulting from the treaty of peace of 1783, the government of the United States, instead of plunging the country into an expensive and bloody war, sought redress by an amicable negotiation. Success attended the pacific measure. By mutual stipulations, provision was made for adjusting all the matters in dispute between the two nations, for which the mission was instituted. Of this treaty the French government loudly complained, and *pretended* that it contravened some of the articles of our commercial treaty with France. There was no foundation for this complaint; the treaty with Great Britain (well known by the name of Jay's treaty) containing an article, introduced by Mr. Jay, for the express purpose of securing to France and other nations, with whom we had engaged in treaties, the perfect enjoyment of every right and privilege to which those treaties entitled them. The real cause of French clamour about this treaty was, *that it prevented a war between the United States and her most hated enemy, Great Britain*. The French government pretended, that some articles in the British treaty gave that nation advantages not secured to France by our commercial

treaty with her. To remove this ground of complaint, though under no obligation to do it, we offered to change our stipulations with her which she said operated to her disadvantage—or to make an entire new treaty, to give to her every advantage which accrued to Great Britain by any article in Jay's treaty. But the French government evaded every offer we could make: it would not negotiate—it would not receive our envoys commissioned for the sole purpose of adjusting, by an amicable negotiation, every point in dispute between France and the United States. She had for two years been carrying on a piratical war against our commerce; to which we had made no armed resistance, and which therefore she preferred to mutual peace; presuming, that while so many nations, subdued by her arms, humbly submitted to their fate, the United States would be alike subservient. Threats, corresponding with these expectations, were thrown out, indirectly, to intimidate our envoys, to induce them to yield to her demands; a compliance with which would have furnished to her enemy, Great Britain, a just cause of war. Those threats made no impression on our envoys. They persevered in their attempts to bring on a negotiation; if with little hope of success, at least with the expectation of such a development of the character and views of the French government, as would satisfy the people of the United States, strongly prejudiced in favour of France, that no treaty with her, compatible with the interest, the honour and the independence of the United States, was practicable. This was sufficiently ascertained some time before Pinckney and Marshall quitted Paris; and at an earlier day they would have sent their final letter to the French minister, but were delayed by Mr. Gerry; on whom, in private conferences, Talleyrand had made impressions favourable to the designs of the Directory; as will be more particularly related in another place. The directory and Talleyrand expected to engage him singly to enter on a negotiation, and to impose on him such terms of a treaty as would suit their own and the interests of France; such unequal terms as they had been accustomed to impose on the vassal nations around them, and which, once stipulated by Mr. Gerry, and favoured by the whole party opposed to the federal administration, which was relied upon as partial to France, they presumed the American government would not dare to reject.

In the same letter, No. XI, dated Oct. 5, 1803, in which Cunningham desires Mr. Adams to inform him of the causes of my removal, he says, that when in Philadelphia, soon afterwards, he was told, that when another mission to the French Republic was concluded on [meaning that which was commenced by the nomination of Mr. Murray] "my aversions to any farther negotiations with "France were so untameable, and so indecorously expressed, as to "render me an unfit medium for the communications between the "two governments, and unsuitable to remain in a ministerial sta- "tion." In the answer of Mr. Adams (Letter No. XII, Oct. 15) he says, "The reason you heard in Philadelphia was quite suffi-

"cient, if there had been no other; but there were many other "and much stronger reasons." All I need say on this reason is—that it is a *nonentity*. And if Mr. Adams, in cases where his resentments are operating, were capable of any just reflection, he would have been ashamed to have adopted it; for he continued me in office almost fifteen months after the institution of the mission; viz. from February 18, 1799, the day he nominated Mr. Murray, until the 12th of May, 1800, when he sent me my dismission.

In his letter XVII, Mr. Adams mentions, as an evidence of my incompetency for the department of state, and consequently to justify my removal, that when in the senate of the United States, I was almost always in a minority of two, three, four or five, in 34. This Mr. Adams has said, as he has said many other things, at random, without examination; which shows how little his naked assertions are to be relied on. The number of federal senators was small; and therefore, on questions in which the different principles or views of the two parties were affected, federal members would of course be in the minority. But I had the curiosity to look into the journal of the first session (1803—4) in which J. Q. Adams and I were in the senate; and in making a list of the instances when the questions were decided by yeas and nays, I found that he was seven times in the majority and nineteen times in the minority; while I was eight times only in the minority and twenty times in the majority; and more than forty times we voted on the same side. I presume (for it is too trifling a matter to be critically examined) that we continued for the most part voting together, until Mr. Adams began to change his course, and finally joined the strongest side. But if a want of talents commensurate with the duties of the office of secretary of state rendered me unfit to retain it, why did he suffer me to hold it so long? Did it require three years and two months for a person of his knowledge, discernment and experience (which he certainly believed were not surpassed, if equalled, in any man in the United States) to make the discovery? And if he had made it, even by the end of one year, where was his regard to his official duty, in letting the public interests suffer, above two years more, and at a most critical period, through my incompetency?

In his letter No. XXVI (February 11, 1809) Mr. Adams is pleased to give me rank with three men whose names are familiarly known throughout the United States—Shays, who headed the dangerous insurrection in Massachusetts—Gallatin, a reputed leader in the whiskey insurrection in Pennsylvania—and Fries, the author of the second insurrection in the same state, in the time of Mr. Adams's presidency. These three instances of *treason*, the highest crime which a citizen can commit, he lowers to a small offence—"a disturbance!"—But he had pardoned Fries! (the mode and the apparent motive will be explained.) And what a cruel thing it would have been to have hung a poor man, only for *disturbing* the tran-

quillity of a state! This same Fries, however, was *convicted of treason*, before the court in which that very able and learned judge, Samuel Chase, presided—the judge whom Mr. Adams calls his friend, and on whom he has pronounced a lofty eulogy. Associating me with the three persons first above named, Mr. Adams asks—“And why may we not have a Pickering’s disturbance?” This idea of Mr. Adams’s was suggested, perhaps, by some expressions in his son’s letter to Mr. Otis; in which he wished to have it believed that my opposition to Mr. Jefferson’s embargo law, after it was passed—even so far as my letter to governor Sullivan was in opposition—was unwarrantable. From this wanton charge, basely insinuated, my *political enemies* will not think any defence to be necessary. However, I will refer to my letter itself, to governor Sullivan, on which the insinuation rests, for a vindication. I need recite only the last sentence of my letter on the embargo (for which I had shown there was no adequate cause) in which I say, “Regardless of personal consequences, I have undertaken to “communicate these details; with the view to dissipate dangerous “illusions; to give to my constituents correct information; to excite “inquiry; and to rouse that vigilant jealousy which is characteristic of REPUBLICANS, and essential to the preservation of their “rights, their liberties, and their independence.” In another part of the same letter, I said, “Nothing but the sense of the commercial states, clearly and emphatically expressed, will save them “from ruin.” Of such sentiments I have no reason to be ashamed; and to have expressed them in the most public manner, is not a subject of regret: they will receive the approbation of every independent mind. But if high authority were necessary to justify them, I would cite that of the same eminent lawyer and upright judge, Samuel Chase:—“To oppose (says he) a depending measure, “by endeavouring to convince the public that it is improper, and “ought not to be adopted; or to promote the repeal of a law already “past, by endeavouring to convince the public that it ought to be repealed, and that such men ought to be elected to the legislature as will “repeal it; to attempt, in fine, the correction of public measures, by “arguments tending to show their improper nature or destructive tendency, never has been or can be considered as sedition, in any “country where the principles of law and liberty are respected; “but it is the proper and usual exercise of that right of opinion “and speech which constitutes the distinguishing feature of free “government.”*

In the same letter, No. XXVI, Mr. Adams says, “I have a few “sheets of paper written on a point on which I differed formerly and “latterly with our angry senator, and which was one of the causes of “his removal; which I will send you, provided you will previously

* From the answer of Judge Chase, to the articles of impeachment against him in 1805.

“ give me your honour that you will return it after you have read “ it, without taking a copy.” I can only conjecture what was the subject of these “ sheets of paper ;”—that it was the impressing of British seamen from neutral merchant vessels. In his letter No. XXXII, March 4, 1809, Mr. Adams encloses five sheets, “ the “ rough draft,” which Cunningham had promised to return. “ I “ shall burn it,” says Mr. Adams, “ because I have made another “ copy more correct, in which I have left out the name, and much “ of the trumpery.” I now recollect reading, about that time, an anonymous publication on the subject of impressments, and that it was ascribed to president Adams as the writer. But I have no recollection of ever discussing with Mr. Adams the principle involved in the question of impressments ; and it is incredible that it should have been a cause of my removal. It is to be placed, with many other pretended causes, to *after thoughts* ; when, as in the case of instituting the mission to France, he was straining his wits to discover and disclose reasons, if they bore only “ the plausible “ appearance of probability” of satisfying public or individual inquirers.

I believe I have now exhibited all the *alleged* causes of my removal from office—except the indefinite one, “ Reasons of State,” but which (see letter XII) Mr. Adams says, “ are not always to be “ submitted to newspaper discussion.” Of these I have promised to take some notice ; and here they are. After the perusal, readers will not wonder that Mr. Adams should be unwilling to subject them to newspaper discussion. An extract from general Hamilton’s letter, published in 1800, “ concerning the Public Conduct and “ Character of John Adams, Esq. President of the United States,” will be a proper introduction to the evidence in the case. Referring to the removal of M’Henry and myself, Hamilton says, “ It “ happened at a peculiar juncture, immediately after the unfavourable turn” [unfavourable to Mr. Adams] “ of the election in New-“ York ; and had much the air of an explosion of combustible “ materials which had been long prepared, but which had been kept “ down by prudential calculations respecting the effect of an ex-“ plosion upon the friends of those ministers in the state of New-“ York. Perhaps, when it was supposed that nothing could be lost “ in this quarter, and that something might be gained elsewhere, “ *by an atoning sacrifice of those ministers, especially Mr. Pickering,* “ who had been for some time particularly odious to the opposition “ party, it was determined to proceed to extremities.” The reader will compare this with the following details.

Hazen Kimball, a very worthy man, had been a clerk in my office. After quitting the office he settled in Savannah. In 1803, being in Massachusetts, and calling to see me, he gave me information relative to my dismission, which I had not expected. Meeting him afterwards at Washington (where I was attending as a member of the senate) I desired him to commit that information to writing ; which he did as in the following certificiate :

"At a public table, M'Laughlin's tavern, in Georgetown, July, 1800, I heard Elias B. Caldwell say, that some time in May preceding, he was present in a public room at Annapolis, when Mr. Smith, the present secretary of the navy, made the following declaration: That we (meaning the democratic party) have been sent down (from Philadelphia) to know on what terms we would support Mr. Adams at the next presidential election. In our answer, among other conditions, was the dismissal of colonel Pickering from the office of secretary of state: but he has delayed it till he lost all hopes of his election by the strength of his own party, and now we do not thank him for it.

"I have shown this statement to Mr. Caldwell, who says, if it does not contain the precise words of Mr. Smith, that it is substantially correct.

"Mr. Caldwell further says, that Mr. Smith said, in the same public manner, that he knew colonel Pickering would be dismissed some time before it took place.

HAZEN KIMBALL."

City of Washington, 29th Dec. 1803.

Having learnt that Thomas C. Bowie, Esq. of Prince George's county, Maryland, (whom I did not personally know, but who was named to me as "a gentleman of high respectability, who had re-tired from the bar") had had a very particular conversation with Robert Smith, on the subject stated in the above certificate, I took the liberty, in April, 1810, of addressing a letter to him, with a copy of the certificate. The following extracts from his answer are all that particularly apply to the case in question.

Extracts of a letter, dated April 16, 1810, from Thomas C. Bowie, Esq. to Timothy Pickering.

"I assure you, sir, it will be a source of much gratification, if any thing in my power can contribute, in the smallest degree, to the exposure of those gross and palpable delusions which have been so long imposed upon the American people, by the abettors of democracy, in regard to your public character."—[Then noticing my official publications relative to our rulers, and their management of the affairs of the United States, Mr. Bowie says,] "In order to impair the effect and universal conviction which they had begun to operate in almost every section of the country, it was soon found necessary to make you the incessant theme of the most bitter invective and vulgar abuse."—"It is impossible for you, sir, to have any adequate idea of the very ungenerous, and I may say wicked, expedients resorted to by the democrats in relation to this subject."

"I certainly did hear Mr. Secretary Smith make the declaration contained in the certificate of Mr. Kimball. A few days before the account of your dismissal arrived at Annapolis, I repaired thither, attending the general court, having just commenced the practice of the law: and, having studied in Baltimore with judge Chase and Mr. Martin, I was well acquainted with Mr. Robert Smith, and the Baltimore Bar generally, with whom I messed in No. 2, at Wharfe's tavern, although then a resident of Prince George's county. One morning, while in bed, Mr. Smith remarked, that in a few days the federalists would receive from the seat of government a piece of intelligence which would both surprise and alarm them. He would not impart what it was, but requested me to notice his prediction. When the mail brought the news of your dismissal, Mr. Smith told me it was *that* to which he alluded; and he supposed I would admit he had some knowledge of cabinet secrets."—"I had understood, a short time previous, that Mr. Adams was negotiating with the leading republican members of the house of representatives, a coalition which

went to secure his twenty-five thousand dollars (a year) at the expense of what he himself had deemed the public good, but a little time before : that general Smith, and other leading democratic members, were, on the eve of Mr. Adams's expected re-election, frequently dining and visiting at his house, and who before that time had never been in the habit of either."

The fact, that I was to be removed, being known among the democrats, while federalists were ignorant of it, is an irrefragable evidence of the intrigue between Mr. Adams and the democrats, to which my removal is to be ascribed.

The reader now sees, in the compass of two or three pages, the real cause of my removal by Mr. Adams ; "the reasons of state," not to be submitted to newspaper discussion. If this statement is sufficient to shock every honest and honourable man, what will be his feelings when he compares it with this solemn declaration of Mr. Adams, in his letter No. XII, Oct. 15, 1808, when speaking of me ? "His removal was one of the most deliberate, virtuous and "disinterested actions of my life!"—And again, on the 25th of November following (letter No. XVII) he calls it "one of the most "virtuous actions of his life!"

Mr. Kimball's certificate, and the extracts from Mr. Bowie's letter, with observations, I published thirteen years ago ; only in the certificate I then, of my own accord, left blanks where I have now introduced, as in the original, the name of Mr. Caldwell. He is the respectable citizen, Elias B. Caldwell, Esq. of the city of Washington, and clerk of the courts there. He also knows the excellent character sustained by Mr. Bowie.

At the time of the former publication (March 1811) I made the following, among other, reflections on this transaction :—"When a "man has, at one period of his life, distinguished himself by his "public services, it is distressing to find and exhibit him, as capable "of straying from the straight path of integrity and truth ; for it "tends to excite suspicions and jealousies towards the most upright "and inflexibly just."

In another part of this Review, I mention the efforts made by Mr. Adams to justify his unadvised institution of a mission to the French republic, in February 1799, when he nominated Mr. Murray *sole* commissioner to negotiate a treaty with its rulers—"men "so bold, so cunning and so false." But as that mission appears to have had an origin similar to that of my removal—if it was not a part, and indeed the important part, of the original intrigue—I shall here introduce what has come to my knowledge concerning it.

In the year 1815, in conversing with some of my friends, of whom the late Thomas P. Grosvenor, a representative in congress from the state of New-York, was one, I said, that for a considerable time I had been endeavouring to make some discovery as to the origin of that mission ; and that I suspected it to be the same with that of my removal—an intrigue between Mr. Adams and the

opposition, or democrats. Grosvenor instantly answered in these words: "Why that was the fact: John Nicholas told judge Van Ness the whole story, and laughed at Mr. Adams's credulity."

John Nicholas was a Virginian, and for several years a member of congress, in Washington's administration, and firmly in opposition. At length he removed to the state of New-York; where, as I have understood, he was appointed a judge of the court of the county in which he resided, and a senator for the district, in the senate of that state. Judge Van Ness was the late Willian P. Van Ness, of the supreme court of New-York.

Here the matter rested for some years; after which, being in company with a number of members of congress, and the conversation turning on some past events, particularly the mission to France in 1799, in the midst of our successful naval hostilities with that power—without the previous mention of it by the president to any head of a department, or to any federalist in or out of congress, as far as was then known—one of the gentlemen said, that when John Dennis* returned from congress, after that session, he said in his hearing, and in the hearing of many others, that a committee of three waited on Mr. Adams, and told him, that if he would institute a mission to make peace with France, and dismiss the secretary of war, Mr. M'Henry, and of state, Mr. Pickering, they would not oppose—or they would support—his re-election to the presidency. Immediately afterwards, I mentioned this information to another member, of my acquaintance: he confirmed it as received by him from another source; and named for his author the same gentleman, a member of congress in 1799, who, the late Gouverneur Morris once told me, negotiated my removal.

The veil being now taken off from the two acts of president Adams, of which no federalist could give a satisfactory solution, the embarrassments attending his laborious attempts to justify those acts, and his glaring inconsistencies, are easily accounted for. The fruits of his toil on these subjects, as displayed in the letters published in 1809 in the Boston Patriot, and those written in 1803 and 1809 to Cunningham, and lately published by Cunningham's son, would cover nearly a hundred printed pages in octavo; whereas, had they originated in considerations purely public, the honest and satisfactory truth might have been expressed in a single page. TRUTH alone is clear and consistent.

With respect to the French mission—at one time Mr. Adams says, the information derived from his minister, Mr. Gerry, formed a full and complete basis on which to institute the mission. Yet, in December, 1793, after he had been for above two months in possession of all that information, and of more, of one kind and another—in addressing congress, he said, "To send another minister, with "out more determinate assurances that he would be received,

* Mr. Dennis was a representative from the Eastern shore of Maryland.

“ would be an act of humiliation to which the United States ought “ not to submit;” and on the 12th of that month, in answer to an address from the senate, he said, “ I have seen no real evidence “ of any change of system or disposition in the French republic “ towards the United States.” At other times, Talleyrand’s letter to Pichon, who communicated it to Mr. Murray, furnished the assurances he had required, of the due reception of an envoy. Mr. Adams’s words are, “ This letter was transmitted by Mr. Murray “ to the American government, and I own I am not acquainted with “ any words, either in the French or English language, which could “ have expressed in a more solemn, a more explicit, or a more de- “ cided manner, assurances of all that I had demanded as condi- “ tions of negotiation.”* Yet, when, ten years before, he nominated Mr. Murray to the senate, and sent them a copy of Talley- rand’s letter, he declares to that body (in order to conciliate and obtain their approbation) that Mr. Murray “ shall not go to France “ without *direct* and *unequivocal* assurances from the French govern- “ ment, signified by their minister of foreign relations, that he shall “ be received in character.”

I have said, that Mr. Gerry’s long letter to me, dated October 1, 1793, in the harbour of Boston, on the morning of his arrival, was written on his passage from France, and studiously prepared, to put the best face on his conduct while in Paris. In that letter he says, “ Before the arrival of the despatches of the envoys, the minister “[Talleyrand] appeared to me sincere, and anxious to obtain a re- “ conciliation.” And again, “ On the 26th of July I left Paris; and “ from the best information which I could obtain relative to the “ disposition of the executive directory (for I never had any direct “ communication with them) they were very desirous of a recon- “ ciliation between the republics.” All this is very courteous and charitable towards the French rulers and their minister Talleyrand, from whom he had received, and with tame submission, the most pointed insults. But see his language eleven years afterwards, when his former communications were not recollected, or were for- gotten, *and when he expressed his real sentiments—the same that re- mained stamped on his mind from the deep impressions made upon it by the actual occurrences in Paris.* These sentiments are found in his letter dated at Cambridge, in July, 1809, addressed to Mr. Talley- rand, and published, with Mr. Adams’s letter, in the Boston Patriot of August 26. It was written in reference to one of Talleyrand’s letters to Pichon (that dated August 23, 1793) which also Mr. Adams had published in the Boston Patriot. This letter contained an expression somewhat contemptuous, in regard to his friend and “ his minister,” Mr. Gerry, at which he took offence. Talleyrand said, “ I wished to encourage Mr. Gerry by testimonies of regard, “ that his good intentions merited, although I could not dissemble

* Letter III, dated April 1809, published by Mr. Adams in the Boston Patriot.

" that he wanted decision at a moment when he might have easily
 " adjusted every thing. It does not thence follow that I designated
 " him: *I will even avow that I think him too irresolute to be fit to has-*
 " *ten the conclusion of an affair of this kind.*" On this Mr. Gerry
 makes a pointed appeal to Talleyrand: "Let any candid man read
 " our correspondence, and declare, if he can, *that your propositions*
 " *were not altogether vague, from the beginning to the end.*"

I have one more case to mention, on which I shall be sparing of comments, and content myself with a brief statement of facts: it is the case of Fries, of Pennsylvania, twice convicted of treason; the second time on a new trial, ordered on a supposed incorrectness discovered after the first conviction, and allowed by the court, though not affecting the facts on which the prosecution had taken place, nor the construction of the law applied to the facts; in other words, not affecting the merits of the case. Judge Iredell, of the supreme court of the United States, presided on the first trial, and was assisted by judge Peters, the district judge of Pennsylvania. At the second trial, judge Chase presided, and judge Peters sat with him. The first trial had occupied nine days. Judge Chase considered, that much irrelevant matter had been suffered to be introduced in the first trial, in respect to cases in English books, occurring in times and under circumstances which rendered them inadmissible on trials for treason under the constitution of the United States; and made known this opinion, in writing, that such cases would not be permitted to be introduced in the trial of Fries. Upon this, William Lewis and A. J. Dallas, of counsel for Fries, refused to act; and advised Fries not to accept of any other counsel, should the court offer to assign any; which advice Fries accepted. On the 24th of April, 1800, the trial commenced. On the evening of the second day, the evidence was closed; and the court charged the jury; who, retiring for two hours, brought in a verdict of guilty.* On the second day of May (the last day of the session) Fries was brought into court, and received sentence of death.

Mr. Lewis, in his deposition (to be used on the impeachment of judge Chase) states, that, soon after sentence of death had been pronounced on Fries, Thomas Adams, son of the president, told him, that "his father wished to know the points and authorities " which Mr. Dallas and he had intended to rely on, in favour of " Fries, if they had defended him on the trial. The attorney general of the United States, Charles Lee, made the like request to " Mr. Lewis and Mr. Dallas. These gentlemen made their statement accordingly, and sent it to Mr. Lee; who, on the 19th of " May, acknowledged the receipt of it, and informed them that he

* This brief sketch I have abstracted from the deposition of William Rawle, Esq. (who as district attorney conducted the prosecution) taken to be used in the trial of judge Chase, on his impeachment. Mr. Rawle remarks, that the trial was conducted with the utmost fairness, and that the conduct of the court was marked with great tenderness and humanity towards the prisoner.

"had immediately laid the same before the president, who had directed him to return to them his thanks for the trouble they had so obligingly taken." It would not have been difficult to anticipate the consequence of consulting, in this case, *only the counsel of the convict*: Fries was pardoned. It was a *popular act*, in Pennsylvania. My removal from office was on the 12th of the same month of May, as I have already stated, *with its motives*. I content myself with just remarking, that Mr. Adams sought not any information in this case from the persons best qualified to give it *impartially*—the *judges of the court*; especially when the presiding judge was Samuel Chase, his old congressional friend, of whom he gives this honourable character: "I have long wished for a fair opportunity of transmitting to posterity my humble testimony to the virtues and talents of that able and upright magistrate and statesman."* Nor would it have been amiss to have applied to William Rawle, district attorney of Pennsylvania, who had conducted both the trials, and from whose fair mind might have been expected information quite as correct as that which could be derived from the counsel of the convict. But if to *pardon* was the object, it was expedient to consult *his counsel only*. Mr. Dallas, in his deposition (also taken in the case of the impeachment of judge Chase) avowed the leading motive with him and Mr. Lewis, in eventually refusing to act as counsel for Fries. He says, "I may be permitted, like wise, to discharge a duty to the counsel, as well as to all the parties interested, in observing, that Mr. Lewis and myself were greatly influenced, in the conduct which we pursued, by our opinion of the means most likely to save the life of Fries, under all the circumstances of the case." Judge Chase says, they refused to appear for Fries, "because they knew the law and the fact to be against them, and the case to be desperate: and supposed that their withdrawing themselves" [under the circumstances above intimated] "in the event of a conviction, which from their knowledge of the law and the facts they knew to be almost certain,† might aid the prisoner in an application to the President for a pardon."‡

General Hamilton (in the letter of 1800, on the conduct and character of Mr. Adams) noticing this case of Fries, and the extraordinary step of consulting only the culprit's counsel, makes this reflection on the pardon: "We are driven to seek a solution for it in some system of concession to his political enemies; a system the most fatal for himself, and for the cause of public order, of any that he could possibly devise. It is by temporisings like these, that men at the head of affairs lose the respect both of friends and

* Letter II, dated April, 1809, published in the Boston Patriot.

† Lewis and Dallas were Fries' counsel on his first trial, and therefore perfectly acquainted with the merits of the case.

‡ Judge Chase's Defence before the Senate.

" foes: it is by temporisings like these, that in times of fermentation and commotion, governments are prostrated, which might easily have been upheld by an erect and imposing attitude."

The reflections of Mr. Adams are of quite a different complexion. In his tenth letter in the Boston Patriot (May 17, 1809) remarking on his responsibility for all his executive acts, and therefore that it was his right and duty to be governed by his own mature and unbiassed judgment, though unfortunately it may be in direct contradiction to the advice of all his ministers, he says, " This was my situation in more than one instance. It had been so in the nomination of Mr. Gerry; it was afterwards so in the pardon of Fries: *two measures that I recollect with infinite satisfaction, and which will console me in my last hour.*"

How much cause for satisfaction and consolation he can find in the case of Mr. Gerry, the reader will be able to judge, from the proceedings, exhibited in this Review, of that gentleman, as Mr. Adams's minister to the French Republic. As to Fries, he having been at the head of a second insurrection in Pennsylvania, to prevent, by force, the execution of the laws enacted by congress for levying taxes laid in pursuance of the express provisions of the constitution, and, in 1798, of the most pressing necessity, for the common defence of the country, and the protection of its great and essential commercial interests, against the hostilities of the French Republic; under these circumstances, the public welfare appeared to demand a signal example of inflexible justice.

We see, however, that in various acts of president Adams, combined with their apparent motives, he can glory, and draw consolation, where other men would find cause only for profound regret.

Those, who have been accustomed to view Mr. Adams as a bold and able leader in the American revolution; as a man of extensive learning, and much and useful experience; as a great and upright statesman; and therefore entitled to all the high offices and honours which his fellow citizens could bestow, and did confer upon him; will be astonished at the picture of his character presented in this Review, and not without difficulty admit that it is a likeness. My veracity is pledged for all I state as facts. What I give on information from others, I offer because I think it entitled to belief. Of the correctness of my inferences and conjectures from any facts and circumstances which I state, every reader will judge. If, after all, any should remain incredulous, Mr. Adams himself may at least contribute to remove their unbelief. In the 26th letter, vol. I. p. 129, London edition, of his " Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America," the doubting reader may find a solution of the apparent enigma. There Mr. Adams says, " The passions are all unlimited; nature has left them so: if they could be bounded, they would be extinct; and there is no doubt they are of indispensable importance in the present system. " They certainly increase too, by exercise, like the body. *The*

“ *love of gold* grows faster than the heap of acquisition. *The love of praise* increases by every gratification; till it stings like an adder, and bites like a serpent; till the man is miserable every moment when he does not snuff the incense. **AMBITION** strengthens at every advance, and at last takes possession of the whole soul so absolutely, that the man sees nothing in the world of importance to others, or himself, but in this object. The subtlety of these three passions, which have been selected from all the others because they are aristocratical passions, in subduing all others, and even the understanding itself, if not the **CONSCIENCE** too, until they become absolute and imperious masters of the whole mind, is a curious speculation.” He then mentions “ the cunning with which they hide themselves from others, and from the man himself too; the patience with which they wait for opportunities; the torments they voluntarily suffer for a time, to secure a full enjoyment at length.”

On this recital, who can forbear to exclaim, “ *Ecce Homo!*” or, in the solemn words of Nathan to David, “ Thou art the man!”

Mr. Adams would spurn at an exhortation from me; but he may not refuse to apply to himself his own admonition. “ Men should endeavour at a *balance* of affections and appetites, under the monarchy of **REASON** and **CONSCIENCE** within, as well as at a balance of power without. If they surrender the guidance, for any course of time, to any one passion, they may depend upon finding it, in the end, an usurping, domineering, cruel tyrant.”*

At the age of eighty-eight years, it might be expected that a man’s strong passions would have cooled; but those of Mr. Adams, by an immoderate indulgence, have acquired the mastery of his soul; and now, incapable of personally enjoying their gratification, he lives in his son; and, if he survive a few more months, he will be pleased or tormented, as that son shall succeed or fail, in the last object to which American ambition can aspire.

In the account here given of the *intrigue* in which the *precipitate institution of the mission to France originated*, compared with Mr. Adams’s *too often* repeated avowals of *public motives exclusively*, every reader will have the means of forming his opinion, whether *these, or others purely selfish*, the offspring of his ungoverned ruling passions, were the decisive inducements. But although he readily adopted the measure, it may easily be imagined that it was the contrivance of a more cool and crafty head—of the man of whom that experienced diplomatist, Mr. Liston, once said, that, “ for conducting an *intrigue*, there was not one American who came within a thousand miles of him.”† This crafty person perfectly understood the character of Mr. Adams, and knew the avenues to his heart. Mr. Liston said, at the same time, “ that never, at any government where he had been a minister, had he so little trouble

* Same volume, p. 130.

† I received this anecdote from an unquestionably correct source, a very intelligent American gentleman present in the company when the remark was made.

" in gaining all desirable information: that from Mr. Adams himself he obtained what he wanted; for that nothing more was requisite than to listen, while he took his own course in talking." This brings to my mind an anecdote, of late accidentally communicated to me. Mr. Adams paid a handsome compliment to Washington, and said, "*He could keep his mouth shut—I never could.*" And this again reminds me of a letter written to me some years ago by a gentleman of respectable character, of which the following is an extract:

" Some time in the fall of 1807, I was in company with general Henry Lee, at — in Virginia. During the day, various topics of conversation were introduced. Among others, some remarks were made upon the unhappy consequences which had resulted from the change in the federal administration of the government of the United States. And this change was in a great measure, by the person submitting these remarks, attributed to the apathy and inertness of federalists at elections. General Lee replied, that he did not hesitate to allow some influence to that cause, but that he ascribed the principal cause to Mr. Adams himself; and then remarked, that being in Philadelphia in the summer of 1800, when the subject of the approaching presidential election had excited much interest, he dined with Mr. Adams, in company with Mr. Jefferson. In the afternoon, when Mr. Jefferson had retired, he took the liberty to caution Mr. Adams, who had been, as he considered, very unguarded in the presence of Mr. Jefferson; and observed, with the view to enforce that caution, that he knew Mr. Jefferson was using all his influence and intrigue to supersede him in the presidential chair. Mr. Adams received this friendly admonition with apparent displeasure; and observed, with warmth, that he believed Mr. Jefferson to be more friendly towards him, than many who professed to be his friends; and that he further believed, Mr. Jefferson never had the ambition or desire to aspire to any higher distinction than to be his first lieutenant."

So respectable is the source of this information, that it requires no confirmation. It has, besides, the advantage of *internal evidence* of its correctness, in the perfectly characteristic answer of Mr. Adams, which concludes the extract. This, probably, was the time when Mr. Jefferson was making his warmest professions of friendship to Mr. Adams, of which the latter afterwards found he had been the dupe, and the discovery of which authorized him to reproach Mr. Jefferson with "a want of sincerity." Three years before, Mr. Jefferson had proclaimed his *humble* pretensions, in his inaugural address to the senate, when he took the chair in that assembly; he having been elected vice-president, as Mr. Adams was elected president, of the United States. Mr. Jefferson appeared to rejoice that the burthen of the chief executive power had fallen on Adams's shoulders, so much abler than his own to sustain its

weight! Remarking to the senate, that the primary business of the office of vice-president being to preside over the forms of that house, he added, "No one more sincerely prays that no accident 'may call me to the higher and more important functions which 'the constitution devolves on this office.'" This profession was unnecessary—but not without an object. To the uninformed (in all communities the numerous class) as to the true characters of public men, it bore the appearance of the amiable virtue of humility; and Mr. Jefferson believed in its auspicious tendency to advance his interest on the next occasion; not doubting, in reference either to philosophy or the gospel, the correctness of the position, "He 'that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Among those in public life, or the citizens well acquainted with distinguished public characters, there was one, and I presume but one, in the United States, who supposed Mr. Jefferson's declaration to have come from the heart: I hardly need say, that this one was Mr. Adams.

Mr. Adams catches at every straw, and sometimes at phantoms, which, in the use he makes of them, may have even a remote tendency to give a colour of necessity for instituting his extraordinary mission to the French Republic in 1799. For this end, he allows himself to go back to the year 1793, to exhibit the temper of the people in relation to France and Great Britain; and tells the following tale: "Jonathan Dickinson Sargeant and Dr. Hutchinson, 'two old revolutionary Americans, extremely popular, put them-selves at the head of the mob. Washington's house was surrounded by an innumerable multitude, from day to day, huzzaing, 'demanding war against England, cursing Washington, and crying 'success to the French patriots and virtuous republicans.'—"J. "Q. Adams first turned this tide; and the yellow fever completed "the salvation of Washington. Sargeant and Hutchinson died of "it. I was assured, soon after, by some of the most sensible, substantial and intelligent quakers, that nothing but the yellow fever "saved Washington from being dragged out of his house, or being "compelled to declare war against England."* This story was too absurd and ridiculous to be believed. When writing it, Mr. Adams forgot that the president of the United States did not possess the power to declare war; and that no leader of a mob in Philadelphia could be so ignorant as not to know that congress alone possessed that power. I do not know whether Dr. Hutchinson left any offspring; but the respectable sons of Mr. Sargeant will not thank Mr. Adams for placing their father, an eminent lawyer, and the attorney general of Pennsylvania, at the head of a *mob*, and of a mob to commit such an outrage on the president of the United States—and that president, Washington. Incredible, however, as was this story—of which I had never heard before—I wrote to William Rawle, Esq. at that time the district attorney of the United States for Pennsyl-

* Letter to Cunningham, No. XII, Oct. 15, 1808.

vania; and, referring him to Mr. Adams's statement, requested an answer. In his letter, dated the 18th of last December, he thus writes: "In respect to the mob asserted to have surrounded the "president's house, &c. &c. Judge Peters and I have already had "several conversations. We read this part of the Cunningham "Correspondence with surprise, as we neither of us at the time "knew, nor till then had heard, of such transactions. The judge "lived out of town, but was frequently in town. I resided about "three of our squares distant from the president, passed his door "almost every day, and regularly attended his weekly levees. I "never noticed the slightest disturbance of the kind. Mr. Sar- "geant and Dr. Hutchinson, although zealous in their politics, were "not men who would have so degraded themselves."

Where, let me now ask, could this mob story have its origin? It is a sheer fabrication. But who was its artificer? Mr. Adams is responsible for it. And it further shows the justness of the remark I have had occasion to make and to repeat, that where his passions or interested views are enlisted, no reliance can be placed on his statements.

Hamilton acknowledged, and every other well-informed man will acknowledge, that Mr. Adams, in 1798, contributed largely to rouse the spirit of the nation to resistance against the unexampled insults and injuries we had experienced from the French Republic; and he boasts of the beneficial operation of the measures then taken, and of our naval successes in the limited war authorized by congress; when, as he says,* "the proud pavilion of France was, in "many glaring instances, humiliated under the eagles and stripes "of the United States." But the greatest triumph of all, he says, was in the humiliation of the haughty directory; who, renouncing all their unfounded claims, sought for peace—"transmitting to him the most "positive assurances, in several various ways, both official and in- "official, that they would receive his minsters, *and make peace on his "own terms.*" These last words are, assuredly, a fond assumption of Mr. Adams. The directory could never have entertained the idea of giving Mr. Adams a *carte blanche*, on which to write what articles he pleased. It is too absurd to be imagined, except by Mr. Adams when his mind was highly sublimated. Had such an offer been made, it would have furnished additional ground for believing the directory were not sincere. But, unfortunately, in the heyday of victory, when the United States were rising in their own estimation, and were cheered by the salutations of admiring Europe, the American admiral struck his flag; the "proud pavilion of France" rose above the "eagles and the stripes;" and, instead of "making "peace on his own terms," he received the law from France. He even gave up the trophies of our victories, stipulating to restore to France her national vessels captured by ours. He *purchased* peace

* Letter No. XXX, Feb. 22, 1809, to Cunningham.

at the expense of twenty millions of dollars (for that was the estimated amount of French spoliations) relinquished to France, without any equivalent. For the United States had been fairly exonerated of the burthen of their treaties with France, by her " infractions, " violence, injustice, and breach of faith;* and congress accordingly declared them null and void. But the French government would not consent to give any indemnities to the American merchants, for those spoliations of their property, unless the United States would revive and restore the treaty of alliance, with its burthensome guarantee. To get rid of this, the claims of the merchants were abandoned.

Such were the fruits of the *glorious* naval war of 1798, and of the *inglorious* peace by which it was terminated. Yet, Mr. Adams fondly expects, that for these acts in his administration, laurels will crown his monument, and flourish in immortal green. " If ever," says he, " If ever an historian should arise, fit for the investigation, " this transaction must be transmitted to posterity as the most glorious period of American history, as the most disinterested, prudent and successful conduct in my whole life. For I was obliged " to give peace and unexampled prosperity to my country for eight " years—and if it is not for a longer duration, it is not my fault—" against the advice, entreaties and intrigues of all my ministers, " and all the leading federalists in both houses of congress."

This rodomontade of Mr. Adams is perfectly in character. It is akin to another fond conceit of his, which we find in his 28th letter (July 27, 1809) published in the Boston Patriot—the last paragraph: " I shall continue," says he, " to send you extracts of letters, by which the rise, progress and conclusion of our connexion " with Holland may be in some degree understood; *a connexion* " that accelerated the peace, more than the capture of Cornwallis and " his army." Who can forbear to smile at the folly as well as the vanity of this assumption? Cornwallis surrendered on the 18th of October, 1781. On the 27th of February, 1782, a resolution was carried, in the house of commons, against the whole force of the administration, declaring it to be inexpedient any longer to prosecute offensive war against America. And, to put an end to all further hesitation on the part of the crown, the house of commons, on the fourth of March, resolved, " that the house will consider as " enemies to his majesty and the country, all those who should advise " or attempt a further prosecution of offensive war on the continent " of America." These votes were soon followed by a change of administration, and by instructions to the commanding officers of his Britannic majesty's forces in America, which conformed to them.†

* The words, marked with inverted commas, are Mr. Adams's, in letter XXX, to Cunningham.

† Marshall's Life of Washington, vol. IV, p. 567.

In the summer following, a British minister was sent to Paris to negotiate a treaty of peace with the commissioners of the United States. The important preliminary step had been insisted on and obtained by Mr. Jay—that the *United States were to be treated with as already independent*. He gave notice of this to Mr. Adams, who was in Holland, and who arrived in Paris some time after the middle of October. On the 30th of November, 1782, Dr. Franklin, Mr. Adams and Mr. Jay signed the preliminary treaty of peace with Great Britain, which constituted, in fact, the definitive treaty.

Now the connexion (by which I presume Mr. Adams means the treaty) with Holland, negotiated by him, was not concluded until the 8th of October, 1782; almost a year after the capture of Cornwallis, and when the Dutch government knew the negotiations for peace between the United States and Great Britain had been for some time going on at Paris. Hence it is past all doubt, that the resolutions of the house of commons, the consequent change in the British ministry, and the negotiations begun at Paris, decisively influenced their high mightinesses to conclude the commercial treaty with Mr. Adams. This inference appears inevitable, if we take a view of the deplorable state of Holland, after England had made war upon her, and cut up her commerce by extensive captures. I will take Mr. Adams's own description, in one of his letters to congress—the epitome of similar information spread over other letters. In that of the 4th of August, 1781, he says, “I should scarcely be “credited, if I were to describe the present state of the country. “There is more animosity against one another, than against the “common enemy. They can agree upon nothing; neither upon “war nor peace; neither upon acknowledging the independence of “America nor upon denying it.” Again, in the same letter, he says, “In short, this nation has no confidence left in its own wis-“dom, courage, virtue or power. It has no esteem, nor passion, “nor desire, for either. It loves and seeks wealth, and that “alone.”*

One word more on Mr. Adams's mission of February 1799, to make peace with the French Republic.

This mission was instituted in the midst of our naval successes, and of the increasing spirit of the people. But for this, the system of administration which had been established under Washington, and until then continued under Adams, would have remained. The true character of the French government had been developed, and generally understood—and consequently was generally detested. Our proper weapon of war, our navy, would have been strengthened by an adequate increase; our commerce would have revived and flourished. On the change of the French revolutionary government, by which its powers were placed in the hands of Bonaparte, the spirit, vigour and ability which the United States had displayed, and would

* Letter LXIII, dated Feb. 8, 1810, in the Boston Patriot.

have continued to display, would have secured to them the respect of that extraordinary man, and saved *them* from renewed insults, and their *commerce* from the more extended and aggravated depredations under the imperial ruler, than had been experienced from the despotic directory. The United States would not have been told by Bonaparte's minister, that those who administered their government were "men without just political views, without honour, with "out energy"—an *insult unexampled*, and, what is worse, an *INSULT UNRESENTED*.* Had that first system of the federal government continued to operate, we should have had no indefinite embargo, prostrating our commerce, in subserviency to France; nor its sequel, the non-intercourse laws, in their effects and consequences alike destructive; nor, finally, a three years' war with Great Britain; a war which cost the United States more than a hundred millions of dollars, and the lives of probably thirty thousand of our citizens, *without obtaining any one of the objects for which it was professed to be declared*.

Dr. Johnson has observed, that "there is nothing more dreadful "to an author than neglect; compared with which, reproach, ha- "tred, and opposition, are names of happiness." Mr. Adams felt himself to be in this unfortunate situation. He began to publish his long letters in the Boston Patriot on the 10th of April, 1809; and in two months he had advanced to his eighteenth letter—the subject, his unadvised mission to France. But it seems no notice was taken of them, by friend or foe. "A most profound silence," says he, "is observed relative to my scribbles. I say not a word "about them to any one; and nobody says a word to me. The "newspapers are still as midnight." But, unwilling to think this silence resulted from general indifference to his letters (though doubtless that was the fact) he fancied that "sulphureous combus- "tibles were preparing under ground, and the electrical fire col- "lecting in the clouds," to burst upon him all at once, to destroy him: but, consoling himself with the expectation that he might es- cape unhurt from the thunder and lightning, and the eruption of the volcano, he determines that "his pen shall go as long as his fingers "can hold it."† Some of his well-wishers, perceiving that in his own bosom the lightning and the fiery lava were preparing, may regret that they ever found vent, satisfied that in the end the explosion and eruption will not injure those he meant to destroy, and that the *great sufferer* will be *himself*. They may see verified his own as- sertion, that "records themselves" [his letters were designed for records] "are often liars;" and his prediction fulfilled, that "he should not be believed." The statements and evidences, which I

* Letter of Feb. 14, 1810, from the French minister, the duke de Cadore, to general Armstrong. Madison was then president.

† Letter XXXVIII, June 7, 1809, to Cunningham.

have exhibited, must convince every impartial reader, that *his records are not entitled to belief.*

Mr. Adams often complains that the federalists are his enemies; sometimes limiting the charge to their leaders. If this were true, what was the cause? The federalists wished to retain their ascendancy, for their own sake and their country's; and every body of men, every association, will have a leader or leaders. Mr. Adams was once their chief. And what produced an alienation? *Their* principles and system of government remained unchanged. To the conduct of their chief, then, must their alienation be ascribed. And how was it possible for men of intelligent and independent minds to persevere in their confidence, and continue their attachment, where they saw, constantly displayed, boundless vanity, disgusting egotism, repulsive self-sufficiency, and an ambition so inordinate as to be capable of sacrificing principles, system and consistency, to personal gratification?

Was Mr. Jay ever reproached by any *federalist*, that deserved the name? With eminent abilities, with as pure integrity, and true zeal to serve his country, as any citizen ever displayed, he was driven from power by the *enemies of federalism*. But the profound respect, which his public conduct had produced, has suffered no diminution. Still revered, admired and loved, his name, without a stain to lessen its lustre, will descend to posterity with distinguished brightness.

SECTION IV.

ELBRIDGE GERRY.

THIS gentleman makes so prominent a figure in Mr. Adams's letters in relation both to himself and to me, I must unavoidably consume a good deal of ink and paper in exhibiting his conduct and character. I regret the necessity of entering on details, which I fear may fatigue the reader, but without which the force of Mr. Adams's calumnies and of my vindication cannot be fully understood. This biographical sketch of Mr. Gerry, though in some respects minute, may nevertheless be found in a degree interesting, when it shall be recollected, that, subsequently to the actions and events detailed, he was twice elected by the people of Massachusetts to be governor of that state, and afterwards by the people of the United States to be their vice-president.

Mr. Gerry, appointed a delegate to congress from Massachusetts, in 1776, had the good fortune to be present at the adoption of the declaration of independence, and the honour of subscribing his name to that celebrated state paper. He continued a member o

that body for some years. He was also a member of the national convention by which the present constitution of the United States was formed (and carped at some of its provisions) and a member of the house of representatives in the first congress, and in one or two of the succeeding congresses.

The financial embarrassments of the French monarchy produced, about the year 1787, a crisis, which, in a succession of remedial measures and reforms, issued in the subversion of the monarchy, and the establishment of a republic. The people of the United States, flourishing and happy in their own republican institutions, rejoiced in the prospect of a free government to be established in France. This joy was raised to enthusiasm, by the recollection of the aids received from that country in effecting their own independence. A war between France and her neighbours soon succeeded. The energies of her government, and the zeal of the people, brought powerful armies into the field; which enabled her to defeat her enemies, and to invade their territories. In a few years, the neighbouring nations were subdued. Her pride increased with her conquests; and her injustice was not slow to follow in their train. "I considered (says the wise man) all the oppressions that are done under the sun—and on the side of the oppressors there was POWER." A series of unprincipled rulers governed the state, and in succession cut off the heads of their predecessors. At length a constitution was formed, and a government organized, on republican principles, which gave hopes, to the lovers of liberty, of a permanent establishment. The legislature was composed of two branches, denominated the Council of Ancients, and the Council of Five Hundred; and the executive consisted of five persons, called the Directory. But the revolutionary spirit continued. The executive power found the means of impairing the independence of the legislature; and, practising much tyranny at home, set no limits to its exercise on all the nations within its reach. Remote as were the United States, their commerce brought them near to every portion of the world. Upon various pretences, all alike unfounded, the corsairs of France were let loose upon that commerce, and her government insulted our country.

Willing to hope that these outrages and injuries originated in misrepresentations and misconceptions of the conduct and views of the United States in relation to France, president Washington appointed general Charles Cotesworth Pinckney minister plenipotentiary to the French republic, to make to its government those frank and friendly explanations, which, if received in the spirit with which they were to be offered, would restore harmony and a beneficial intercourse between the two countries. General Pinckney, accepting the appointment, proceeded on his mission, and early in December, 1796, arrived at Paris. He was introduced to the minister for foreign affairs, Mr. de la Croix, by Mr. Monroe, as his successor in the station of minister plenipotentiary from the United States;

and in that character delivered an official copy of his letters of credence, which announced his public character, under the signature of the president and the great seal of the United States. General Pinckney's public character being thus ascertained, all the indignities practised towards him by the French government were insults, as well to the country which he represented, as to himself. Anxious, however, to restore that harmony which once existed between America and France, Pinckney forbore to resent this treatment, hoping that a reconciliation might yet be effected. But he was disappointed, and was required to leave France. Upon this requisition he quitted Paris, and travelled with his family to Amsterdam, there to await the orders of his government. General Pinckney might bear those indignities with the more patience, because they were not peculiar to him. In one of his letters to the department of state, he says, "I am informed that they have already sent off thirteen foreign ministers ; and a late emigrant,* now here, has assured them, that America is not of greater consequence to them, nor ought to be treated with greater respect, than Geneva or Genoa." "Those who regard us as being of some consequence (continues general Pinckney) seem to have taken up an idea, that our government acts upon principles opposed to the real sentiments of a large majority of our people ; and they are willing to temporise until the event of the election of president is known ; thinking, if one public character [Adams] is chosen, he will be attached to the interest of Great Britain ; and that if another character [Jefferson] is elected, he will be (to use the expression of Du Pont de Nemours in the council of ancients) devoted to the interest of France." Every body knows that Adams and Jefferson were the rival candidates for the presidency, on the retirement of Washington.

Notwithstanding this haughty and insolent rejection of general Pinckney, it was thought expedient to make one more effort to recover the good will of our termagant sister. A more solemn embassy was therefore instituted ; and general Pinckney, general Marshall, and Francis Dana, then chief justice of Massachusetts, were appointed by president Adams, with the advice and consent of the senate, "envoys extraordinary and ministers plenipotentiary of the United States to the French republic." Elbridge Gerry was Mr. Adams's choice ; and it was with some difficulty that the heads of departments prevailed on him to substitute Mr. Dana ; the same gentleman of whom Mr. Adams made mention, alike honourable

* Meaning Mr. Talleyrand, I presume, who visited this country in the year 1794 ; appeared in the character of an emigrant, and was treated with hospitality and respect. If his object in coming to the United States was to escape the guillotine, yet, from what is mentioned by general Pinckney, we may infer that he acted the part of a spy ; and probably in that character made his peace with the directory, who in 1797 appointed him their minister for foreign affairs. For his great talents and *other qualities*, no man was better adapted to their service.

and just, in his letters published in the Boston Patriot, in 1809-10. But Mr. Dana, declining the service, Mr. Adams recurred to the first object of his partiality, Mr. Gerry. Further opposition was vain. One reason assigned by Mr. Adams for preferring Mr. Gerry was (and I wish it to be remembered) that, besides possessing the requisite talents, *he was a firm man, and superior to all the arts of French seduction!*

Marshall and Gerry arrived in France about the last of September, 1797, and proceeded to Paris, where general Pinckney joined them. They in due form announced their arrival to Mr. Talleyrand, the French minister for foreign affairs. Cards of hospitality were sent them, to save them from molestation by the police; and they expected to be formally received, and to enter on the business of their mission. But in a few days they had reason to think that the first favourable appearances were delusive. They delivered to Mr. Talleyrand copies of their letters of credence from the president, showing their characters, and desiring full credit to be given to their communications. But they were not admitted to an audience of the directory. At length, certain propositions were made to them by Mr. Talleyrand's agents to which they must assent, as preliminaries to their admission as ministers of the United States. These preliminaries were, a disavowal of some parts of the president's speech to congress, touching the conduct of the French government, notoriously founded on facts, and therefore impossible to be disavowed; but at which the directory *affected* to be offended. Nevertheless, they were not inexorable. Their extreme resentments might be allayed, and their WOUNDED HONOUR healed, by a douceur (gratuity or bribe) of fifty thousand pounds sterling (222,000 dollars) for the pockets of the directory and their minister Talleyrand; and a loan to the amount of thirty-two millions of florins, equal to twelve millions eight hundred thousand dollars; for which Dutch paper securities, under the name of Rescriptions, of that nominal sum, but acknowledged to be worth not more than ten shillings in the pound, might be assigned to the United States. These *modest* propositions were of course not assented to. Our envoys had no power to give their assent. Their instructions expressly forbade the making of any loan: it would have violated our duty as a neutral nation. But if the douceur had been given, and our envoys had been so far disposed to assent to a loan as to consult their government upon it (an operation of full six months) which indeed they offered to do; the horrible depredations on our commerce were not to be discontinued; and these were already estimated at fifteen millions of dollars, and were still going on with unremitting activity.

The names of Talleyrand's private agents, designated by the letters X and Y, were written at length in our envoys' despatches; but accompanied with an engagement, on the part of the United States, *that their names should in no event be made public.* For this reason, when the despatches were to be laid before congress, I sub-

stituted the letters X and Y. The letters W and Z were also introduced by me, gratuitously, instead of the proper names of two other persons who had some agency in these transactions, and through whom X and Y might perhaps be discovered.

Mr. Talleyrand's corrupt overtures were repeated, and pressed upon the envoys; and soon with threats of vengeance from the directory, if not complied with. Thanks to the intelligence and firmness of Pinckney and Marshall, these threats were utterly disregarded. I do not add the name of Mr. Gerry, although he then concurred with them, for reasons which will hereafter appear.

Thus slighted, thus insulted, and kept at an official distance, Pinckney and Marshall would not make to Talleyrand, what he desired, *inofficial* visits to discuss *official* business.* Mr. Gerry, however, because he had seen Talleyrand in the United States, in the form of an emigrant, was pleased, *contrary to the opinions of both of his colleagues*, to make him an early visit. Once he was accompanied by Mr. Y and Mr. Z. The latter was a French gentleman, occasionally if not regularly employed by Talleyrand; and, understanding the English language, served as an interpreter. Mr. Gerry, thus in the presence of Y and Z, spoke to Mr. Talleyrand of the propositions which had been made to our envoys by Y, in behalf of Mr. Talleyrand: to which statement the latter answered, "The information Mr. Y had given was just, and might always be relied on."

Although not received, yet the depredations on our commerce, the capture and condemnation of our vessels, were so extensive, and pressed with ardour, that Pinckney and Marshall proposed the making of a respectful communication to the minister, to pray for a suspension of those proceedings until the further order of the directory. "Mr. Gerry is of a contrary opinion: he apprehends that 'by hurrying we shall irritate the government.'† It was now the 15th of October. To several subsequent attempts to act with some decision, Mr. Gerry was constantly opposed. War, like a terrible spectre, had risen up to his view. Precipitation, he said, would certainly produce war. Yet he acknowledged the demands of France to be unjust, and her treatment of the envoys insulting; and to such a degree, that, if proceeding from any other government in the world, he said he would not submit to them for ten days.

Near a month having elapsed, since the envoys had delivered to the French minister copies of their letters of credence, without their being admitted to an audience of the directory, Pinckney and Marshall wished to call the attention of the minister to the subject of their mission. To this Mr. Gerry at length agreed; but the next day changed his mind, and proposed the postponement of such a

* At a subsequent period, events of magnitude, affecting the United States, induced them to depart from this determination.

† General Marshall's manuscript journal, a copy of which is now before me.

letter until all their conversations already detailed should be put in cipher (a tedious operation) and six copies made out and sent to their government. "This (says general Marshall in his journal) "would, on a reasonable calculation, require about two or three "months." However, a letter having been prepared, and submitted to Mr. Gerry, and he having employed a day in making essential changes, to adapt it to his own taste—to which the other two envoys yielded, for the sake of unanimity—on the 11th of November it was sent to Mr. Talleyrand. No answer, however, was given to it.

Three months having elapsed, general Marshall draughted a long letter, consisting of a justification of the conduct of our government in relation to France. This was done by the 10th of January, 1798. It was submitted to Mr. Gerry (whose humour it was necessary to consult to obtain his signature) to suggest any alterations and amendments he might think proper. That such a letter should be written, had been agreed on by the 18th of December; and that it should be concluded with a request to the French government to open the negotiation, or to grant to the envoys their passports, to return home. The letter was closed, however, in very gentle terms (undoubtedly to satisfy Mr. Gerry) requesting, that if no hope remained of restoring harmony between the two republics, by amicable negotiation, "their return to their own country might be facilitated." Mr. Gerry's vexatious delays prevented the completion and translation of the letter until the 31st of January, when it was signed, and sent to the French minister.

Mr. Gerry appears now to have had frequent appointments to meet Mr. Talleyrand; but this gentleman was often absent, nor did he think Mr. Gerry of consequence enough to make any apology for repeated disappointments, until a fourth had occurred. Then one of Talleyrand's secretaries called on Mr. Gerry, to make a slight apology; and this secretary took this opportunity (Feb. 3) to remark, that they had received a very long letter from the envoys, and inquired what was its purport—"for they could not take the "trouble to read it!" and he added, "that such long letters were "not to the taste of the French government, who liked a short ad- "dress, coming at once to the point." No; the peremptory demands of that government, just or unjust, on the neighbouring nations, subjugated or intimidated by the French arms, superseded all negotiation; and the like short work was intended to be made with the United States. The secretary invited Mr. Gerry to see Mr. Talleyrand the next day.

"February 4.—Mr. Gerry returned from his visit to Mr. Talleyrand, and informed me (says general Marshall) that communications and propositions had been made to him by that gentleman, "which he was not at liberty to impart to general Pinckney or myself; that he had also propounded some questions to the minister, "which had produced some change in the proposition from its ori-

"ginal aspect; that he was to give an answer to-morrow or the day after; and that upon it probably depended peace or war."*

So this distinguished diplomatist, Mr. Gerry, the favourite of Mr. Adams, "whose negotiations were more useful and successful than those of either of his colleagues"†—"by way of excellence (says "Mr. Adams) *my own* ambassador, for I had appointed him against "the advice of all my ministers."‡—This envoy, one of three, and the last of the three, to whom the great interests of the United States in relation to France had been entrusted, engages in private consultations with the French minister, and under an injunction of secrecy, to which he pledges himself, on the business of their important mission! And on his answer to that minister, he says, "probably depended peace or war!" And the whole of this machination was to be concealed from his colleagues! So gross a misdemeanor must be ascribed either to corruption, or to weakness and pusillanimity and vanity: I am ready to acquit him of the first.

On the 18th of January, at the instance of the directory, the two legislative councils passed a decree, enacting that "every vessel "found at sea, loaded in whole or in part with merchandise, the "production of England or of her possessions, shall be declared "good prize, whoever the owner of these goods or merchandise "may be."§ On the 6th of February, general Marshall put into Mr. Gerry's hands the draught of a letter to the French minister, remonstrating against that decree, and closing with a request of passports. But Mr. Gerry was too busily occupied with his secret negotiations with that minister to attend to the letter, though it would affect nearly every American vessel on the ocean. On the 14th of February Mr. Gerry returned the draught of the letter, with some amendments. It was then put under copy, and translated.|| On the 18th, being fully prepared, it was offered to Mr. Gerry to sign—which he declined.

The envoys had been waiting for an answer to their long letter, dated the 17th and delivered to the minister on the 31st of January; in which, as before mentioned, they had minutely examined all the subjects on which the French government had made complaints, and exhibited a complete vindication of their own. At length Mr. Talleyrand, on the 18th of March, deigned to send them an answer, in the usual style of French republican sophistry

* General Marshall's manuscript journal. The above paragraph I have copied verbatim. For all other details concerning the envoys and their proceedings, in Paris, which are not communicated in their public despatches, I am indebted to General Marshall's journal, of which, on his return from France, he allowed me to take a copy. The original is in his hands.

† So says Mr. Adams in letter XIV, Nov. 7, 1808, to Cunningham.

‡ Letter XXXIV, March 20, 1809, to Cunningham.

§ This is the prototype of Bonaparte's Berlin decree.

|| The envoys' letters to Mr. Talleyrand were in their own language, but accompanied by French translations, as well to prevent misconstructions, as any pretence for delay in answering them.

and round assertions, which he knew were alike false and insulting, and near its close is the following paragraph :

“ It is, therefore, only in order to smooth the way of discussions, “ that the undersigned has entered into the preceding explanations. “ It is with the same view, that he declares to the commissioners “ and envoys extraordinary, that, notwithstanding the kind of pre- “ judice which has been entertained with respect to them, the “ executive directory is disposed to treat with that one of the three, “ whose opinions, presumed to be more impartial, promise, in the “ course of the explanations, more of that reciprocal confidence “ which is indispensable.”

The above paragraph, being interpreted, would read thus :—
 “ You, Messrs. Pinckney and Marshall, discerning what the rights “ and interests of your country demand, and being determined to “ maintain them, are not the persons with whom the directory “ choose to have any intercourse. Mr. Gerry, on the contrary, “ being more open to useful impressions, ‘ more impartial’—that is, “ not partial to those rights and interests, at least so far as com- “ ports with the present views and wants of the French govern- “ ment—possesses the qualifications proper for an envoy with whom “ the directory will negotiate.”

At the beginning, Mr. Talleyrand’s agents X and Y had stated to the envoys the necessity of paying money, and a great deal of it, to sooth the irritated directory, and of agreeing to a very large loan. The envoys repelled these demands ; and assured those agents, and Mr. Talleyrand himself, that they had no power to make any loan of money ; and, finally, that their instructions forbade their agreeing to a loan. Mr. Gerry concurred with his colleagues in these declarations. But, after he had been closeted by Talleyrand, and invited to and indulged in frequent secret conferences, he came out a convert to the minister’s avowed opinion, that a loan, to be paid *after the war* with England, was not forbidden by their instructions ; although the direct object of such a stipulation was, to raise the money upon it immediately, to aid *in carrying on the existing war!* And in this new opinion, enforced by the terror of the war with which Talleyrand had inspired him, Mr. Gerry persisted, in opposition to the plain and unanswerable arguments of his colleagues. Their instruction, on this question, was in these words—“ That no aid be stipulated in favour of France during the present war.”

On the 3d of April, the envoys sent to the French minister a full answer to his letter of the 18th of March ; and concluded with saying, that if “ it should be the will of the directory to order pass- “ ports for the whole or any number of them, you will please to “ accompany such passports with letters of safe conduct, which “ will entirely protect from the cruisers of France the vessels in “ which they may respectively sail, and give to their persons, suite,

"and property that perfect security to which the laws and usages of nations entitle them."

After this, general Marshall prepared for his departure, and waited only the order of the directory as to a passport and letter of safe conduct. But these they wished to avoid giving: for though it was perfectly clear that *Mr. Gerry was their man*, they desired not to make a formal selection of him; but that generals Pinckney and Marshall, by asking passports for themselves, would, in effect, make the selection; and by thus withdrawing, in appearance voluntarily, leave Mr. Gerry more at liberty, with some colour of authority, to negotiate alone. It is due to him to say, that he was not guilty of this last degree of folly: he undertook only to negotiate *informally*, and in this way suffered himself to be amused and trifled with for above four months; two months and a half of that time after he had received instructions from his government to leave France. He had repeatedly told his colleagues that he would not stay; but changed his mind afterward, and said he would stay, *to prevent a war*. Threats of various kinds had been thrown out, for six months, to alarm the envoys, and frighten them into a submission to the arbitrary will of the directory; none of which had been carried into execution; and among them this bugbear of immediate war, which Mr. Gerry had now been persuaded to believe would become a reality, and which nothing but his remaining in France would prevent.

The sickness of general Pinckney's daughter compelled him to stay some time in France. General Marshall embarked without delay; and his safe return was a subject of cordial congratulation among his independent fellow-citizens.

The despatches from our envoys, in which the unjust and corrupt demands of the French government were displayed, having been communicated to congress, they ordered them to be published. They were of course circulated by newspapers, and reached England; and from England they travelled to Paris. Upon their arrival, Mr. Talleyrand, with singular effrontery, wrote to Mr. Gerry the following letter, dated May 30, 1793.

"I communicate to you, sir, a London gazette of the 15th of May. You will therein find a very strange publication. I cannot observe without surprise, that intriguers have profited of the insulated condition in which the envoys of the United States have kept themselves, to make proposals and hold conversations, the object of which was evidently to deceive you. I pray you to make known to me immediately the names denoted by the initials W, X, Y and Z, and that of the woman who is described as having had conversations with Mr. Pinckney upon the interests of America. If you are averse to sending them to me in writing, be pleased to communicate them confidentially to the bearer.

"I must rely upon your eagerness to enable the government to fathom those practices, of which I felicitate you on not having been the dupe, and which you must wish to see cleared up.

Accept, &c.

CH. MAU. TALLEYRAND."

It is difficult to conceive of a more pointed insult than was in this letter offered to Mr. Gerry. He was present with Pinckney and Marshall, and heard all the propositions for the douceur and the loan, made by X and Y, in Talleyrand's behalf, and had signed all the despatches which Talleyrand now called "strange publications." Further—Mr. Gerry went with Y to Mr. Talleyrand's office (as before mentioned) where Mr. Gerry told him "that Mr. Y had stated to him some propositions as coming from Mr. Talleyrand, respecting which Mr. Gerry could give no opinion." Mr. Gerry made some other observations: after which, Mr. Talleyrand said, "that the information Mr. Y had given him (Mr. Gerry) was just, and might always be relied on." Now, the precise propositions offered by Y, that morning, are thus given, in the envoys' despatches, as stated by Mr. Y. to Mr. Gerry himself. "He (Mr. Y) then stated, that two measures, which Mr. Talleyrand proposed, being adopted, a restoration of friendship between the republics would follow immediately; the one was a gratuity of 50,000 pounds sterling; the other, a purchase of thirty-two millions of Dutch descriptions." Still further; at a preceding interview between Mr. Talleyrand and Mr. Gerry, Mr. Z being present, Mr. Gerry said, "that as to a loan, we had no powers whatever to make one; " that if we were to attempt it, we should deceive himself and the directory; —but that we could send one of our number for instructions on this proposition, if deemed expedient, provided the other objects of the negotiation could be discussed and adjusted; concluding with a reference to Talleyrand's desire to confer with the envoys individually." To this Mr. Talleyrand answered, "He should be glad to confer with the other envoys individually; but that this matter about the money must be settled directly, without sending to America; that he would not communicate the arret for a week; and that if we could adjust the difficulty respecting the speech, an application would nevertheless go to the United States for a loan." This conversation was on the 28th of October, twenty-four days after all the envoys had arrived in Paris. The threatened arret was to order them off.

The reader now sees, that the two conversations held by Mr. Gerry with Mr. Talleyrand demonstrate, that the money propositions of the "intriguers" are precisely those of Mr. Talleyrand himself—Mr. Y present in one instance, and Mr. Z in the other; that Talleyrand distinguished between the loan—for which the American government must be consulted, and the money—"which must be settled directly;" which was the douceur, or gratuity, of 50,000 pounds sterling. Yet, with all this certainty that X and Y were Talleyrand's agents, Mr. Gerry yields to his demands, and certifies their names! He wished to have evaded the disgraceful compliance; but exacted only one condition, Talleyrand's assurance that their names should not be published on his (Gerry's) authority. Talley-

rand answers, "that they shall not be published as coming from "him." Then follows the certificate in these words :

"Paris, June 1798. Prairial, 6 an.

"The names of the persons designated in the communications of the envoys extraordinary of the United States to their government, published in the Commercial Advertiser of the 11th of April last at New-York, are as follow :

X is Mr. _____,

Y is Mr. Bellamy,

Z is Mr. Hauteval.

E. GERRY."

"*To the Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the French Republic.*"

This certificate is No. 12, among the documents communicated to congress by Mr. Adams, on the 18th of January, 1799 ; and to this No. 12 I then subjoined the following note :

"Mr. Gerry has inserted the proper name of X in this document, as given to Mr. Talleyrand ; but the person designated by X not having (like Y) avowed himself, the promise made to him and Y, 'that their names should in no event be made public,' is still obligatory on the Executive in respect to X, and therefore his name is here omitted.

T. PICKERING."

But, besides thus debasing himself in giving to Talleyrand the names of his own agents, Mr. Gerry stated, that "they did not, to "his knowledge, produce credentials or documents of any kind." But what credentials could be necessary, when Mr. Talleyrand had acknowledged to Mr. Gerry himself, that Y was his agent in the propositions he had made ; when not only X, but Talleyrand also, had made to Mr. Gerry the same propositions, for the gratuity and a loan ? Mr. Gerry did not stop here : in another letter to Talleyrand, he says, "In regard to the citizens attached to your employment, and authorized by you to see the envoys on your official communications, I do not recollect a word from any of them which had the least relation to the proposition, made by X and Y in their informal negotiations, to pay money for corrupt purposes." Now when, on the 28th of October, Mr. Talleyrand made to Mr. Gerry the same money propositions, (as I have before stated) Z (Mr. Hauteval) was present, and was desired by Talleyrand to repeat what he had said to Mr. Gerry. Another fact was certified by Mr. Gerry—that three of the persons were foreigners, and the fourth (Hauteval) Mr. Gerry says, "acted merely as a messenger and linguist."—Mr. Talleyrand had now obtained, through Mr. Gerry's pusillanimity, the ground-work for a publication in Paris, ridiculing the envoys as the dupes of the pretended intriguers, and using Mr. Gerry's answers on the subject to justify the statement. Mr. Hauteval was not merely a messenger and linguist, but a *solicitor*, in this business, for Mr. Talleyrand ; of which take the following decisive proof, it being an extract of a letter, dated June 15, 1798, from Mr. King, our minister in London, to the secretary of

state, and which was published, as a note, in my report. Col. Trumbull is the painter so well known in that profession.

"Col. Trumbull, who was at Paris soon after the arrival there "of the commissioners, has more than once informed me, that Hauteval told him, that both the *douceur* and the *loan* were indispensable; and urged him to employ his influence with the American "commissioners to offer the *bribe*, as well as the *loan*." Yet this same Mr. Hauteval, acting a part in this government farce, writes to Mr. Talleyrand—"My sensibility must be much affected on "finding myself, under the letter Z, acting a part in company with "certain intriguers, whose plan it doubtless was to take advantage of "the good faith of the American envoys, and make them their dupes."—"Citizen" Talleyrand, now prince Talleyrand, was long enough minister of foreign affairs to accumulate a princely fortune, by practising, for himself and his principals, on the vassal states subdued by, or trembling in terror of, French armies, the same exactions with those he attempted to impose on the American envoys.*

On the 4th and 5th of March 1798, the first despatches from our envoys came to hand. Being voluminous, and in cipher, much time was required to decipher them, and make copies to be laid before congress. On the 23d of that month, by the president's direction, I wrote a letter, addressed to all the envoys; in which I quote from their No. 5, dated the 8th of January, the following passage: You "repeat, that there exists no hope of your being officially received "by that government, or that the objects of your mission will be "in any way accomplished." 'This opinion is sanctioned by the whole tenor of your communications; and we trust that soon after the date of your No. 5 you closed your mission, by demanding passports to leave the territories of the French Republic.' Then, adverting to the fair and honourable views of the American government, which dictated the mission, and the extreme neglect with which they, and through them their country, had been treated by the government of France, my letter proceeds: "Under these circumstances, the president presumes that you have long since quitted Paris and the French dominions." Then, noticing their intention to make one more attempt to draw the French government to an open negotiation, in which there was a bare possibility of succeeding, the president authorized their staying to complete a treaty; but, if there appeared a design in that government to procrastinate, they were directed to break off the negotiation, demand their passports, and return. "For (it was added) you will consider, "that *suspense* is ruinous to the essential interests of your country;" and this instruction was given them: "In no event is a treaty to be "purchased with money, by loan or otherwise. There can be no

* It is perhaps hardly known, that this prince is a citizen of Pennsylvania. He was citizenized when there in the form of a French emigrant. I have somewhere among my papers a copy of the certificate of his admission.

"safety in a treaty so obtained. A loan to the republic would "violate our neutrality; and a douceur to the men now in power, "might, by their successors, be urged as a reason for annulling the "treaty; or, as a precedent for further and repeated demands."

In his letter of May 13th, addressed to me, Mr. Gerry acknowledged the receipt of my letter of the 23d of March, delivered to him the preceding evening by the special messenger, sent to France in a public vessel of the United States. The instructions in that letter Mr. Gerry said he should duly observe; yet suffered himself to be amused by Talleyrand's idle proposals of a negotiation, until near the end of July; even when the French minister's letters were marked with repetitions of insulting sentiments towards the American government, particularly in suggesting doubts of its sincerity in its measures to effect a settlement of differences—reproaches which Mr. Gerry knew to be unfounded—and after he had, to his colleagues, pronounced the government of the French Republic "the "proudest as well as the most unjust government on the face of the "earth; that it was so elevated by its victories as to hold in per- "fect contempt all the rights of others; and that with this disposi- "tion it would certainly make war on us, if we refused to comply "with what its pride would insist on, because the measure had been "proposed."* Thus completely had Mr. Adams's able and magnanimous ambassador become the dupe of the French minister's threats, mingled with blandishments flattering to his vanity. Mr. Gerry had even the folly to imagine his colleagues to be envious of his good fortune: "They were wounded (he said) and he was not "surprised at it, by the manner in which they had been treated by "the government of France, and the difference which had been "used with respect to him."† How differently his great friend and protector, president Adams, *at that time*, viewed his conduct, will appear by the following extracts of my letter, dated June 25, 1793, to Mr. Gerry, which, together with his voluminous documents, were by the president communicated to congress on the 18th of Jan. 1799.

Extract of the letter to Mr. Gerry, dated June 25, 1793.

"By the instructions dated the 23d of March, which agreeably to the president's directions I addressed to generals Pinckney and Marshall and yourself, and of which six sets were transmittted, one by a despatch boat sent on purpose, and some of which doubtless reached you during the last month, you will have seen that it was expected that all of you would have left France long before those instructions could arrive, and which were transmitted rather from abundant caution than necessity, seeing no probability or hope existed that you would accomplish the object of your mission. The respect due to yourselves and to your country irresistibly required that you should turn your backs to a government that treated both with contempt; *a contempt not diminished but aggravated by the flattering but insidious distinction in your favour, in dispragement of men of such respectable talents, untainted honour and pure patriotism, as generals Pinckney and Marshall, and in whom their government and country*

* General Marshall's Journal—Feb. 26, 1793.

† General Marshall's Journal—April 3.

reposed entire confidence; and especially when the real object of that distinction was to enable the French government, trampling on the authority and dignity of your own, to designate an envoy with whom they would condescend to negotiate. It is therefore to be regretted, that you did not concur with your colleagues in demanding passports to quit the territories of the French Republic, some time before they left Paris."

"It is presumed that you will consider the instructions of the 23d of March, before mentioned, as an effectual recall. Lest, however, by any possibility, those instructions should not have reached you, and you should still be in France, *I am directed by the President to transmit to you this letter, and to inform you, that you are to consider it as a positive letter of recall.*"

If the reader has had patience to accompany me through this abridged history of the occurrences at Paris in relation to the French government and our envoys, and particularly to the conduct of Mr. Gerry, he will be prepared to understand and appreciate the passages in my report on French affairs, which Mr. Adams marked to be struck out, and which were accordingly expunged. The reader will see, in another part of this Review, general Marshall's testimony to the correctness of the report as laid before congress. The following passages between brackets are those ordered to be struck out, and complete the report as originally written and submitted to the president. A few words of the report, as adopted by the president, are introduced, to render those passages perfectly intelligible.

Paragraph 6. Mr. Gerry wishes to evade Talleyrand's demand of the names of the persons designated by the letters W, X, Y and Z, and with reason; for he and his colleagues had "promised "Messrs. X and Y that *their* names should in no event be made "public. [I know not what considerations could warrant a departure from this promise, on the supposition that their names were unknown to the French government; and admitting that they were known (which was the fact) the minister's request was impertinent and insulting; and to comply with it was submitting to an indignity.] In the same paragraph—"Mr. Gerry had Mr. Talleyrand's own assurance that Mr. Y was acting by his authority. [It is to be regretted that an envoy from the United States should have consented to act a part in this farce.] In the same paragraph—Mr. Gerry, "besides formally certifying to Mr. Talleyrand the names of his *own private agents*, [giving colour for his affected ignorance of them, in using the hypothetical expression, 'if any of those persons were unauthorized to act,' and adding] that 'they did not produce, to his knowledge, credentials,' &c." In the same paragraph—"Mr. Talleyrand answered, that the information Mr. Y had given him (Mr. Gerry) was just, and might always be relied on. [This surely was a 'credential' for Mr. Y, to vouch not only for his past, but for any future, communications to the envoys, as made by the minister's authority.]"

* The following passage is in the same paragraph of the printed report: "Mr. Y, himself, who is Mr. Bellamy, of Hamburg, in his public vindication, declares, that 'he had done nothing, said nothing, and written nothing, without the orders of citizen Talleyrand.'"

Paragraph 9. "On the 2d of December X, Y and Z dined together at Mr. Talleyrand's [familiarly] in company with Mr. Gerry; and, after rising from table, the money propositions, which had before been made, were repeated, in the room and in the presence, though perhaps not in the hearing, of Mr. Talleyrand. Mr. X put the question to Mr. Gerry in direct terms, either, 'whether the envoys would give the *douceur*,' or 'whether they had got the *money* ready,' [meaning the *douceur*.]"

Paragraph 12. "It was to accomplish the object of these [scandalous] intrigues, that the American envoys were kept at Paris, unreceived, six months after their credentials were laid before the directory."

Paragraph 13. The report, mentioning the threats, which during four or five months had been uttered, of immediate orders to the envoys to quit France, and of war in its most dreadful forms—which threats had induced Mr. Gerry to separate himself from his colleagues, and stay in Paris—goes on to say, that "those threats had not been executed, and the unworthy purposes for which they had been uttered had been obvious. [It is further unfortunate that Mr. Gerry should have imagined it to be his duty to remain in France near three months after the instructions reached him, busied in informal negotiations, hopeless in their nature, and unwarranted by those instructions; in which, too, he was pointedly told, 'that *suspense* was ruinous to the essential interests of his country.'"]

Paragraph 20. "Hitherto, instead of a [sincere and anxious] desire to obtain a reconciliation, we can discover in the French government only *empty professions* of a desire to conciliate"—

Paragraph 23. "On the 12th of May, the new instructions of March 23d, sent by the Sophia packet, reached Mr. Gerry, [requiring him, situated as he then was, to demand his passports, and return; for, possessing no powers to negotiate, it was impossible that any circumstance mentioned in the instructions, to warrant his staying any longer in France, could exist. He was informed, too, that *suspense*, the natural consequence of his stay, was ruinous to the essential interests of his country. Mr. Gerry, however, instead of conceiving himself bound immediately to demand his passports and return, only thought himself authorized to give immediate information to the minister of foreign affairs,] and he gave immediate notice to the minister, that he should return to America in the Sophia, as soon as she could be fitted for sea. [He remained, nevertheless, much longer in France, vainly seeking pacific arrangements.]

Paragraph 28. "Such are the proceedings of the French government, by its minister, Mr. Talleyrand, before the arrival of the printed despatches of the envoys: [and where can we find any mark of 'a sincere and anxious desire to obtain a reconciliation?']

Same paragraph. After noticing the impossibility of the envoys' negotiating on the terms proposed by Mr. Talleyrand, "because directly repugnant to their instructions: [It is really surprising that such renewed propositions should not have appeared to Mr. Gerry to be, what they really were, illusory, and calculated only to amuse.]

Paragraph 34. "While we, amused and deluded by warm but empty professions of the pacific views and wishes of France, and by [Mr. Gerry's] informal conferences, might wait in fruitless torpor, hoping for a peaceful result."

Such are the passages in my original report, on which Mr. Adams has made the atrocious charge, that "I inserted a most virulent, false and calumnious philippic against Gerry." I need not appeal to generals Pinckney and Marshall, who are intimately acquainted with facts, and will assuredly justify all I have said; but every reader will see, that the parts struck out are only inferences and remarks on notorious facts—facts stated in the official despatches of the envoys which are signed by Mr. Gerry, or in his own official communications. But the reader cannot possibly conceive of the virulence of Mr. Adams himself, in this case, without seeing that charge in its connexions: it shall be exhibited.

Mr. Adams, having taken an unadvised step, in instituting a mission to France in February 1799, nominated Mr. Murray, then minister resident of the United States in Holland, sole minister plenipotentiary to negotiate a treaty with the government of the French Republic. The measure was condemned by the most enlightened federalists. It paralysed the public spirit, at that time roused to a proper sense of the unexampled injuries and insults of that republic. It subverted the temple of federalism; and, burying its destroyer in its ruins, rendered strikingly applicable to Mr. Adams, his own quotation in another case—

—————Nec lex est justior ulla
Quam necis artifices arte perire sua.

Which, as applied in this case, may be thus translated: *No law is more just than that to the contrivers of mischief their own arts should prove fatal.* This measure, if clearly correct and patriotic, in the actual state of things, in relation to France and the United States, would not have required so long and laboured an argument, and the production of so many letters and papers, for its justification. Yet it is the burden of a number of his letters to Cunningham, and of many more which he published in 1809, in the Boston Patriot. And he introduces the names of many persons who had given him information, official and unofficial, that the directory desired to make peace; all which, in his communications to congress in December 1798, he declared unsatisfactory; yet in 1809 he musters them together, in order to prove the propriety, expediency, and

moral certainty, of negotiating an honourable peace.* In his message of June 21, 1798, to congress—feeling with some force the monstrous indignities with which Pinckney, the minister of Washington, and Pinckney, Marshall and Gerry, his own ministers, had been treated and finally rejected—he said, “I will never send another minister to France, without assurances that he will be received, respected and honoured, as the representative of a great, free, powerful and independent nation.” In his letter No. XXXIV, March 20, 1809, to Cunningham, forgetting what he had declared eleven years before, concerning Gerry’s information, he says, “Mr. Gerry, in an official public letter, conveyed to me, at the request of the directory and their secretary, ‘Talleyrand, the most positive and express assurances that I had demanded.’” The reader will now compare this solemn asseveration with Mr. Adams’s message to the senate, nominating Mr. Murray; in which no use is made of Mr. Gerry’s official letter, but of Talleyrand’s letter to Pichon, which he communicated to Mr. Murray, who sent it to his own government.†

“Gentlemen of the Senate,

“I transmit to you a document which *seems* to be intended to be a compliance with a condition mentioned at the conclusion of my message to congress, of the 21st of June last. Always disposed and ready to embrace *every plausible appearance of probability* of preserving or restoring tranquillity, I nominate William Vans Murray, our minister resident at the Hague, to be minister plenipotentiary of the United States to the French Republic. If the senate shall advise and consent to his appointment, effectual care shall be taken in his instructions, that he shall not go to France, without *direct* and *unequivocal* assur-

* Among these, was the late Dr. Logan of Pennsylvania. He was of the society of *Friends*, whose leading principle, every one knows, is opposed to war. A gentleman of fortune, he went to Europe at his own expense. Anxious for peace, he visited Paris, in 1798, and conversed with Talleyrand, from whom he received the information to which Mr. Adams refers; and, on his return home, in the autumn of that year, communicated the same to him. Yet, far from setting any value upon it at that time, it became a subject of his censure. In his answer, Dec. 12, 1798, to the senate’s address, Mr. Adams says, “Although the officious interference of individuals, without public character or authority, *is not entitled to any credit*, yet it deserves to be considered whether that temerity and impertinence of individuals, affecting to interfere in public affairs between France and the United States, whether by their secret correspondence or otherwise, and intended to impose upon the people, and separate them from their government, ought not to be inquired into and corrected.” This suggestion, doubtless, gave rise to an act of congress to restrain such private interferences; and its popular name was the *Logan Law*. Dr. Logan was an acquaintance of mine; and I am perfectly satisfied of the purity of his views. For the same solicitude to preserve peace to his country, he made a voyage to England, in 1810, when there were signs of war in the American horizon. He visited British ministers—noblemen—gentlemen—farmers—in a word, some among all classes of the people, in various parts of England; and when I saw him, on his return, he informed me, that all were averse to a war with the United States—with the single exception of one lieutenant in the navy.

† Mr. Pichon, once known in America as the *charge des affaires* of the French republic, was at this time officiating in the same character in Holland, where Mr. Murray was resident as the minister of the United States. The “document,” mentioned by the president, was Talleyrand’s letter to Pichon of Sept. 28, 1798.

ances from the French government, signified by their minister of foreign relations, that he shall be received in character, shall enjoy the privileges attached to his character by the law of nations, and that a minister of equal rank, title and powers shall be appointed to treat with him, to discuss and conclude all controversies between the two republics. JOHN ADAMS.

“Feb. 18, 1799.”

The reader must be struck with what Mr. Adams assumed for the ground of this nomination, relating to a matter of very high national concern, and manifestly of great difficulty to manage, and bring to a safe and successful issue. The ground assumed did not rest on *probability*, nor the *appearance* of probability; but only on the *plausible appearance of probability!* And the business to be transacted was the same for which he had before appointed three envoys, two of whom were general Pinckney and general Marshall. Mr. Murray, though worthy and respectable, yet, standing alone, would not have received the senate’s approbation. This was manifested to the president by a committee of that body. The measure itself excited extreme surprise; and, *excepting to a few members in the opposition party who were in the secret*, the surprise was as universal as extreme. No head of a department—not a single *federalist*—had any previous knowledge of it. The shock to the minds of federalists, generally, may be judged of by this fact: As soon as the report of the nomination to the senate took air, a member of the house of representatives, and a friend to Mr. Adams, came to my office, and accosted me in this manner: How is all this? the president’s nomination of Mr. Murray to be minister to France? I answered, I know nothing more about it than you do; I have only heard that the nomination has been made. “Why, is the man mad?” was the member’s reply.

But let us compare the different acts of Mr. Adams. If he had received “the most positive and express assurances that he had demanded,” as the condition on which alone he would send another minister to France, why, in the message to the senate, in order to reconcile them to the measure, and gain their approbation of the nomination, does he declare, that Mr. Murray shall “not go to France without *direct and unequivocal* assurances from the French government, signified by their minister of foreign relations, that he shall be received” in the manner required by his message to congress of the 21st of June, 1798? The two statements are incongruous. The simple truth is, unquestionably, that the materials he had mustered up, with great diligence, and many of which he had displayed in the Boston Patriot, in 1809, and referred to in his letters to Cunningham, to justify himself for instituting the mission, were (like the British orders in council, dragged in by his son J. Q. Adams, to justify his active zeal and vote in imposing on our country Mr. Jefferson’s ruinous embargo) the fruit of *after thoughts*. Most of them, and especially those furnished by Mr. Gerry, on which so much stress was now laid, had been a good while known

to him.* To which add the verbal communications from that gentleman to the president while remaining at Quincy. The reader shall now see of how little value they were in his estimation, only a short time before he instituted the mission.

Congress assembled in Philadelphia in December, 1798. On the 8th of that month, Mr. Adams addressed that body, according to the usage under the federal administrations, in a speech. After noticing the failure of the measures which had been taken to settle our controversies with France, and some of the outrageous acts of its government, he says, "Hitherto, therefore, nothing is discoverable in the conduct of France, which ought to change or relax our measures of defence; on the contrary, to extend and invigorate them is our true policy." Again—"It is peace that we have uniformly and perseveringly cultivated; and harmony between us and France may be restored at her option. *But to send another minister, without more determinate assurances that he would be received, would be an act of humiliation, to which the United States ought not to submit.* It must therefore be left to France (if she is, indeed, desirous of accommodation) to take the requisite steps."

The senate, on the 12th of December, presented to the president a respectful answer to his speech, echoing his sentiments. In the president's reply we have this passage—"I have seen no real evidence of any change of system or disposition in the French republic towards the United States." It should also be recollected, that so late as the 18th of January, 1799, just one month prior to the nomination of Mr. Murray, he laid before congress my report on the conduct of the French government towards the United States; in the last paragraph of which is this expression:—"Warmly professing its desire of reconciliation, it gives no evidence of its sincerity; but proofs in abundance demonstrate that it is not sincere." If Mr. Adams had then thought this opinion erroneous, he would have marked it to be struck out, as he did some expressions in the report which had too pointed a bearing on his favourite, Mr. Gerry.

I have already recited Mr. Adams's charge, that in my report I "inserted a most virulent, false and calumnious philippic against Gerry;" and I presume I have shown to every candid reader that the charge is utterly groundless. In truth, all the *virulence, falsehood* and *calumny* belong to Mr. Adams. If I forbear, in this case, to accuse him of premeditated falsehood, what excuse can be offered for the man who, for ten years, can hoard up his resentments, and then with augmented virulence, even *carelessly* utter unfounded reproaches, which in their nature deeply affect the character of the person at whom they are pointed? I will now give the above mentioned false charge, with its connexions, from

* Mr. Gerry arrived at Boston the first of October 1798, and delivered his budget of letters to Mr. Adams, then at Quincy, and Mr. Adams sent them to me at Philadelphia.

his letter No. XXXIV to Cunningham. My remarks will be included in brackets.

“ You speak of the fortunate issue of my negotiation with France “ to my fame!!! I cannot express my astonishment. No thanks “ for that action, *the most disinterested, the most determined and the most successful of my whole life.* No acknowledgment of it ever “ appeared among the republicans; and the federalists have pur-“ sued me with the most unrelenting hatred, and my children too, “ from that time to this.” [Without admitting the existence of that “ unrelenting hatred,” it is obvious to remark, that trimmers between two parties lose the respect of both. Mr. Adams then mentions the assurances he received, that the government of the French republic would duly admit an American minister to treat of peace; and specifies the letter before mentioned, from Mr. Talleyrand to Mr. Pichon, French charge des affaires at the Hague, to that effect, and which Pichon communicated to Murray.] “ And the assurance” (says Mr. Adams) “ was as complete as words could express.” [Yet we have before seen that Mr. Adams assured the senate, to whom he sent a copy of that letter, that Mr. Murray “ should not “ go to France without *direct and unequivocal assurances from the “ French government, signified by their minister of foreign relations, “ that he should be received in character.*”]

“ The second assurance (says Mr. Adams) was more positive, “ more explicit and decisive still, and through the most authentic “ channel that existed. It was Mr. Gerry, one of my own ambas-“ sadors, and by way of excellence *my own ambassador*, for I had “ appointed him against the advice of all my ministers, to the furi-“ ous provocation of Pickering,” [False—“ furiously” false: there was no passion manifested by me or any other head of department, on the occasion. In denying any of Mr. Adams’s assertions, I feel very little disposed to seek for any voucher beside my own declaration. One other head of a department, however, is still living—Governor Welcott of Connecticut, who was then secretary of the treasury; and to him, if any one doubt, an appeal may be made] “ and against the advice of all the senators whom he could in-“ fluence.” [I have before stated, that when Mr. Adams first pro-posed Mr. Gerry for one of the envoys, the heads of departments objected; and that Mr. Adams gave way, and substituted chief justice Dana of Massachusetts; but, on his declining, Mr. Adams recurred to Mr. Gerry, and in a manner to preclude, as well as I recollect, any further opposition. And as to senators, I am perfectly satisfied, that I never spoke to any one of them. We had entire confidence in general Pinckney and general Marshal; and only wished to save them from being embarrassed with a difficult and troublesome associate; and such, to their extreme vexation and delay, Mr. Gerry proved to be.] “ Mr. Gerry, in an official public “ letter, conveyed to me, at the request of the directory and their “ secretary, Talleyrand, the most positive and express assurances,

“ that I had demanded.” [Yet Mr. Adams had no confidence in them; as is manifest by the passages I have before quoted from his speech to congress in December 1798, and in his reply to the answer of the senate on the 12th of that month. To the senate he said, “ I have seen no real evidence of any change of system or disposition in the French republic towards the United States.”] “ This letter of Mr. Gerry threw Pickering into so furious a rage against Gerry, that in a report to me, which I requested him to draw for me to communicate to congress, he inserted a most virulent, false and calumnious philippic against Gerry.” [I have had occasion to remark, that Mr. Adams, subject to the raging of furious passions, fancies, by the aid of that sublimated imagination which Hamilton ascribed to him, that the storm within his own breast is violently agitating the bosom of another, against whom he is discharging all its fury. My feelings in relation to Mr. Gerry were of a kind *totally different from “ rage.”* And once for all I affirm, that in my various interviews with Mr. Adams, there was never a *single instance of passion on my part*; (I had a higher sense of the decorum proper to be observed towards the president of the United States;) and, what is not a little remarkable, but *one on his*; and this on an occasion which would not have produced in any other man the smallest emotion.* Mr. Adams proceeds,] “ I read it with amazement. I scarcely thought that prejudice and party rage could go so far. I told him it would not do; it was very injurious, and totally unfounded. I took my pen, and obliterated the whole passage as I thought, but after all I let some expressions pass which ought to have been erased.” [I have already given a full account of the report. As printed, general Marshall has pronounced it correct; and the parts struck out, which I have accurately stated, every

* It was this. In 1794, John Q. Adams was appointed minister resident of the United States at the Hague. Just before general Washington's last presidency expired, he raised J. Q. Adams to the higher grade of minister plenipotentiary to Portugal. But his father soon succeeding to the office of president, he changed the son's destination from Portugal to Prussia. In making out a new commission, I called him *late minister resident of the United States at the Hague*; doubting whether it would be correct to call him *late minister plenipotentiary of the United States at the court of Lisbon*, seeing that not having gone thither, of course he had not been received in that character. I concluded, however, to submit the draught to his father, to be approved or altered, as he pleased. He read on till he came to “ late minister resident of the United States at the Hague,” when he burst into a passion, and with a loud and rapid voice exclaimed, “ Not late minister resident at the Hague, but late minister plenipotentiary of the United States to the court of Lisbon, to which office he was appointed by general Washington—not by me—and so he shall be called.” Then, lowering his tone, but speaking with earnestness, he added, “ I am sorry that my son ever went abroad as a minister: I wish he had staid at home; for there was not a pen in the United States of which the Jacobins were so much afraid as of my son's!” Where and what is now this wonderful son? Among the men whom his father called *Jacobins*,—himself, of course, a *Jacobin*. And where, I may also ask, is the father? When the son *tacked*, the father *wore ship*, and followed in his *wake*, Jefferson leading the *van*; Jefferson, whom, not long before, the father pronounced “ the deepest dissembler and most artful hypocrite he ever knew.”

reader will see to be the natural inferences and remarks applicable to the notorious facts exhibited in public documents vouched by Mr. Gerry's own signature.] "Pickering reddened with rage or "grief, as if he had been bereaved of a darling child." [This is not a whit the more credible for Mr. Adams's having declared it. While writing the parts of this letter to Cunningham, in which my name is introduced, it is evident that *his* resentments were kindled to a flame; and thence he fancied that *I* was red hot.] "He even "went so far as to beg that I would spare it, and let it go to con- "gress. But I was inexorable; and his hatred of me has been "unrelenting from that time to this." [The simple history of the report is this: As the president was to communicate it to congress, I of course submitted it to his inspection and correction. When I called for it, and found he had marked some passages to be struck out, I, with perfect calmness, observed, that it would produce some chasms, and, I apprehended, might break the connexion of some parts of the report; and therefore wished it to remain unmutilated. Mr. Adams answered, with a voice steady and slow, precisely in these words, (I here endeavour to indicate the manner by the spaces between them)—"I am not going to send to "congress a philippic against Mr. Gerry." Such is the amount of this mighty affair. I took the report, and had a fair copy made, leaving out the passages and words to which the president objected; and, thus expurgated, he laid it before congress. The parts struck out were of much less consequence than at first sight I had supposed.]

Mr. Adams's blind prejudice in favour of Mr. Gerry was to me incomprehensible. I exhibit, elsewhere, an instance in which it rose to a ridiculous excess. Perceiving that he entertained a high opinion of general Marshall, I put his journal into Mr. Adams's hands, hoping that some parts of it, in which his favourite was necessarily introduced, would lead him to form more correct ideas of his character. Whether he read the journal I do not know: if he did, it is plain that it had no effect; his prejudices appear to have remained unchanged.

On the 21st of September, 1793, I wrote a letter to Mr. Adams, at Quincy, of which the following is an extract.

"I have a letter from general Marshall, dated at Richmond the 15th, in which is the following passage:"

"I have seldom seen more extraordinary letters than those of Mr. Talleyrand to Mr. Gerry. He must have known in what manner they would have been answered before he could have ventured to have written them. That he should have founded a demand to Mr. Gerry, for the names of certain persons, on a document proving that Mr. Gerry had asserted Mr. Talleyrand to have recognized those very persons as his agents, was as pointed an insult as could have been given. There is a fact relative to this business, not mentioned in the despatches, which deserves to be known. The company at the private dinner, to which Mr. Gerry was invited by Mr. Talleyrand, consisted of X, Y

and Z. After rising from the table, X and Y renewed to Mr. Gerry, in the room and in the presence (though perhaps not in the hearing) of Talleyrand the money propositions which we had before rejected."

About this time I received a letter from Mr. P. Johnson, chairman of an assembly of citizens of Prince Edward County in Virginia, covering an open address to president Adams; which I read. Numerous addresses, from all parts of the union, had been presented to Mr. Adams, expressing the just resentment of his fellow-citizens at the deep injuries and insults which we had too long borne from the French republic, and applauding him for the vigour he had manifested in his endeavours to rouse his countrymen to resist and repel them. But the address from Prince Edward was of a character so different, and so charged with insults, that I refused to be the medium of conveying it to the president, and had written a short letter to Mr. Johnson, with which to send back the address; but, just as I was closing it, a newspaper came to hand in which the address was published. I then laid aside the letter I had written, and wrote one of considerable length to Mr. Johnson, on the conduct of the French government, in order to justify our own; and in it inserted the anecdote of the private dinner at Talleyrand's, when the money propositions were renewed. I also mentioned Talleyrand's demand of the names of the intriguers, and that Mr. Gerry complied with the insulting request. Having caused my letter to Mr. Johnson to be printed, I enclosed a copy of it to Mr. Adams, who was pleased to notice it as in the following letter. The reader will see that it is marked *private*; which distinguishes it from his *official* correspondence with me. As it has been his steady aim, in his letters to Cunningham, to *vilify* me, so, in order to counteract his design, Mr. Adams is here exhibited against himself. Not that I consider approbation or praise, from a man so notoriously governed by his passions, by his ambition, vanity and family interest, of any intrinsic value; but his eulogies and censures, when brought together, like two different substances in chemical operations, may neutralize each other.

"Private."

"Quincy, Oct. 15, 1798.

"DEAR SIR—I received your answer to the address from Virginia, concinate and consummate. My secretary gave a hint of it to Mrs. Adams and she insisted upon his bringing it to her Bedside and reading it to her. She desires me to tell you, that weak and low as she is she has spirit enough left to be delighted with it. She says it is the best answer to an address that ever was written, and worth all that ever were written. You may well suppose that I, who am so severely reflected on by these compliments, am disposed enough to think them extravagant. I however think the answer excellent, and wish you had to answer all the saucy addresses I have received. I don't intend to answer any more of the disrespectful ones.

"I am with great esteem,

"Mr. Pickering.

JOHN ADAMS."

But my letter to P. Johnson, though so acceptable to the president and Mrs. Adams, gave offence to Mr. Gerry, who wrote a

letter of complaint concerning it to Mr. Adams; and he transmitted the same to me for publication. I refused to publish it, and assigned this reason—that it would then require from me animadversions more wounding to Mr. Gerry's feelings than any of the remarks in my letter to Mr. Johnson. Mr. Gerry's letter was returned to the president to be restored to the writer. It was a long letter, and trifling as long. He intended it as a justification of the parts of his conduct in Paris which I had noticed in my letter to Mr. Johnson. Its publication would only have exposed him, even without comments, to additional reproach.

The foregoing details of the conduct of Mr. Gerry in Paris, and of his intercourse with the French rulers, will, I presume, induce every reader to assent to the justness of the following summary of his character, in relation to that intercourse:—"He was charmed "with their words, and duped by their professions; he had neither "spirit nor penetration sufficient to negotiate with men so bold, so "cunning and so false."—I am well persuaded, notwithstanding the astonishing partiality of Mr. Adams, that towards the close of the year 1798, when the above sentiment was communicated to him, he thought it correct. It was the sentiment of a man,* of whose discernment and judgment he has always entertained the highest opinion.

SECTION V.

LIEUT. COL. WILLIAM STEPHENS SMITH.

MR. ADAMS, in his correspondence with Cunningham, letting slip no opportunity to revile and calumniate me, introduced the name of his son-in-law, col. Smith, as a theme in relation to which he could vent his reproaches. But for this, *his* name would, on my part, have been consigned to oblivion. Compelled, in my own justification, to notice him, the facts stated will present a further elucidation of Mr. Adams's own character.

Col. Smith, an inhabitant of New-York, was serving in the revolutionary war, when an inspectorship was established, in 1778. Baron Steuben (a German officer, bred to arms) was appointed inspector general, and Smith became one of his deputies. The war ended in 1783. In February 1785, congress determined on a diplomatic mission to Great Britain, and John Adams was elected minister plenipotentiary, to represent the United States at that court. In March, Smith was elected secretary of legation for this mission; having been nominated by Mr. M'Henry, a delegate from Maryland, who had also served in the army, and, in the latter period of the war, as one of the aids de camp to general Washing-

* I think it proper to say, it was not general Marshall.

ton, by whom, in 1795, he had been appointed secretary of war, and from which office, Mr. Adams, after addressing him in opprobrious language, ejected him, a few days prior to my own removal from the department of state. This diplomatic connexion led to a family one. Colonel Smith became the son-in-law to Mr. Adams, marrying his only daughter. The mission was limited by congress to three years, after which Smith returned to New-York.

About this time, the government of the United States was formed, under the constitution; and when the funding system and the national bank had been established, Smith again went to England, with information of the advantages which capitalists might derive from the application of their moneys in those establishments, and in the purchase of new lands. Smith succeeded in this scheme, and large sums were placed in his hands to carry it into execution. These funds enabled him to commence a very expensive style of living, on his return to New-York. He also engaged in dashing speculations, incurred debts, and soon failed; injuring, of course, many creditors, and ruining his friend Burrows, as will presently be related. Smith was thus reduced to a state of dependence on his father-in-law; and *he*, willing to relieve himself, eagerly embraced every opportunity of providing Smith with some public office.

In July, 1793, congress passed a law for raising twelve regiments of infantry, in addition to the existing military establishment. General Washington being appointed commander in chief, he was desired to name the persons whom he would recommend to the higher offices, and particularly for the general staff. Besides the three major generals, Hamilton, Pinckney and Knox, Henry Lee, John Brooks, Wm. S. Smith or J. E. Howard, were proposed for brigadiers; Edward Hand, or Jonathan Dayton, or William S. Smith, for adjutant general; and Edward Carrington for quarter master general. Col. Carrington had served in that office with the southern army, under the command of general Greene; and general Hand in the office of adjutant general, in the last years of the war.

The secretary of war, M^oHenry, having been sent to Mount Vernon with general Washington's commission, I was charged with the duties of his office during his absence, and was with Mr. Adams when he was making a list of nominations to the senate, from that which Mr. M^oHenry had transmitted from Mount Vernon by the mail. The president proposed to give rank to colonel Smith, as a brigadier, before Dayton, who had also served in the revolutionary war, and to name the latter for adjutant general; but, pausing, he said, "I have a good mind to put Dayton before Smith, as a brigadier, and to nominate Smith for adjutant general;" and added, "When I was in England, several British officers, who had conversed with colonel Smith, told me that he would make a distinguished military character." And then, to crown the eulogy, he

said, "Why, sir, he has seen the grand reviews of the Great Frederick, at Potsdam!" This last idea appeared, in the president's view, decisive of Smith's great military pretensions.

Leaving the president, I went to congress hall, and sent the door-keeper to ask some of the senators of my acquaintance to step out. I informed them of the nomination of colonel Smith to be adjutant general, presently to be laid before them, and told them why I thought he ought not to be approved. The nomination was made; and the senate were inclined, at once, to give it their negative; but some of Mr. Adams's particular friends, wishing to save the feelings of himself and his family, desired the senate to postpone their decision till the next day; and they would, in the mean time, wait on the president, and endeavour to prevail on him to withdraw the nomination. They did wait on him—but in vain; finally telling him, however, that if the nomination were not withdrawn, it would be negatived. "I will not withdraw the nomination," was his answer. The next morning the nomination was taken up, and negatived by all the senators, except two. Every circumstance here stated was related to me immediately, by one or more of the senators who were present. I certainly had expressed my opinion to not more than half a dozen senators, all federalists; and not to one who was in the "Opposition." The presumption is therefore conclusive, that many voted from their information concerning colonel Smith, independently of any communication from me. When I come to another transaction, after the new army was disbanded, it will appear that I had not made an erroneous estimate of his character.

In letter, No. XXXVIII, of the "Correspondence," Mr. Adams says, "It is true that Pickering, at the instigation of Hamilton, as I suppose, *who was jealous of Smith as a favourite of Washington, and a better officer than himself*, excited a faction against him, *and to my knowledge* propagated many scandalous falsehoods concerning "him, and got him negatived, though Washington had recommended him to me." Every reader must smile at Mr. Adams's fond conceit, that Alexander Hamilton was jealous of colonel Smith, as a favourite of Washington, and a better officer than himself! If there were the semblance of truth in this ridiculous assertion, it would be obvious to ask, Why then did not Washington name Smith to be inspector and major general, instead of Hamilton; and put the latter with the other two gentlemen, who were proposed as candidates for the office of adjutant general; especially as Smith had served under Steuben, in the inspector's department? But as to Hamilton's "instigation" in the case, the fact is, that about noon, on the day of the nomination of Smith, I expressed my opinion of him to some of the senators, and the next morning it was negatived; and Hamilton, utterly ignorant of the matter, was in New-York. Mr. Adams refrains from charging me with *fabricating* "scandalous falsehoods" concerning Smith; but says I *propagated* them. All that I said of him (excepting in regard to his talents, of which I did not think

very highly, and I expressed what I thought) I had derived from a very credible source, several years before; and on that information gave my opinion to some senators. It related to a private trust of magnitude, in which colonel Smith was so unfaithful, that it appeared to me unsafe to commit the confidential office of adjutant general to his hands. I was not unaware of the hazard I ran in speaking to senators, in this case; and perfectly remember remarking to some one of them, that what I had said to him and others, would probably, by some means, come to the president's ears, and cause my removal from office; but adding—"I have done only what I "thought to be my duty, and am willing to abide the consequences."

Near the close of the year 1798, general Washington came to Philadelphia, to meet generals Hamilton and Pinckney (Knox had refused to serve, because he was not appointed the first major general) to consult on the organization of the army. Colonel Smith was a candidate for the command of the regiment to be raised in the state of New-York; but Washington and the major generals received information so unfavourable to Smith's character, in point of integrity, that they did not recommend him. Unwilling however to reject him peremptorily, general Washington addressed a letter to the secretary of war, in which is the following passage: "As "well myself as the two generals whose aid I have had in the "nomination, have been afflicted with the information, well or ill- "founded, that he stands charged, in the opinion of his fellow-citi- "zens, with very serious instances of private misconduct, [instances "which affect directly his integrity as a man. The instances al- "leged are various, but there is one which has come forward in a "shape which did not permit us to refuse it our attention. It re- "spects an attempt knowingly to pledge property to major Bur- "rows, by way of security, which was before conveyed to Mr. "William Constable, without giving notice of the circumstances, "and with the aggravation that major Burrows had become the "creditor of colonel Smith, through friendship, to an amount which "has proved entirely ruinous to him.] While the impossibility of "disregarding this information forbade the selection of colonel Smith "absolutely; yet, the possibility, that it might admit of some fair "explanation, dissuaded from a conclusion against him. As it will "be in your power to obtain further light on this subject, it has ap- "peared advisable to leave this matter in the undetermined form in "which it is presented, and to assign the reason for it. You are at "perfect liberty to communicate this letter to the president. Can- "dour is particularly due to him in such case. It is my wish to "give him every proof of frankness, respect and esteem." This letter is dated at Philadelphia, December 13, 1798. On the 17th, Mr. M'Henry, the secretary of war, wrote a very kind letter to colonel Smith, and enclosed a copy of general Washington's, for the purpose of obtaining the explanation of the transaction referred to. Smith, on the 20th, answered in a very long explanatory letter;

which, no doubt, was perfectly satisfactory to his father-in-law, president Adams, who was never disposed to believe any thing adverse to the character and interest of any of his family. Colonel Smith was nominated to the senate, and the nomination received their assent. Colonel Smith's explanation, however, differed widely from that of major Burrows, whom, profiting of his generous friendship, he had reduced from a genteel competency to absolute beggary ;—to a condition still worse ; for, after selling his whole estate, to fulfil his pecuniary engagements for Smith, he was yet left involved, on the same account, and at the mercy of his creditors, whose forbearance, only, saved him from a jail.

The mission to France in 1799, suddenly instituted by president Adams, striking the public mind like a shock of electricity, soon paralyzed the increased and increasing energies of the nation, animated with the brilliant actions of our infant navy ; and there being a prospect that a treaty of peace would be the result, the new little army was disbanded, in the summer of 1800. Col. Smith being again without employment, the president appointed him surveyor of the district of New York, and inspector of the revenue for the ports within the same. But this appointment being made in the recess of the senate, it was necessary to nominate him to that body, on their assembling in November 1800, at the city of Washington. This nomination (as usual when objections or doubts concerning the candidate exist) was referred to a committee, of which the late Gouverneur Morris was chairman.* This nomination of an officer of the customs pertaining to the treasury department, the committee, of course, applied there for information. The secretary answered, that he possessed no information respecting this nomination of col. Smith. The committee, however, received recommendations, under respectable names, in favour of col. Smith ; besides letters from the collector and naval officer, certifying col. Smith's diligence in his new office. *It should be remembered, that Smith was then standing on his good behaviour* : his continuance in office depended on the approbation of the senate, upon a nomination to be made to that body. Other papers were delivered to the committee by the secretary of the senate, which, as he informed them, had been entrusted to him for that purpose by the president of the United States. One of the latter purported to be a copy of a letter of December 13, 1793, from general Washington to the secretary of war, of which I have just given an extract. But all that part of the extract which I have included between brackets was omitted ; that is, all that related to major Burrows.

Col. Smith's name being thus again brought before the senate, when nominated to be surveyor of the customs for the district of

* It is proper for me to remind the reader, that I had been removed by Mr. Adams in the preceding month of May ; but the facts I am going to state, rest on authentic documents, copies of which are now before me.

New York ; and gentlemen recollecting objections made two years before, which prevented Washington, with his two generals, decidedly recommending Smith for a military commission ; the nomination was committed, as already mentioned. The committee received and collected, in the course of two months, a mass of information, which, some time in February 1801 (when the session of congress and Mr. Adams's presidency were near expiring) they reported in gross to the senate. The whole, in my copy, occupies eighty-six pages of large letter paper. The impression left on my mind, from the information I received of the transaction, from one or more of the senators, is, *that the papers were not read in the senate* ; unless, perhaps, by some individuals, who would toil through them in the few remaining busy days of the session ; and, under these circumstances, the nomination was approved, with only eight negatives, among whom was Gouverneur Morris, chairman of the committee, and perfectly possessed of all the evidence in the case ; and no one will question his discernment or impartiality in judging. There are other distinguished names, among the negatives, of gentlemen still living.

But I have not done with these documents. The copy of general Washington's letter, relative to Smith, and which was communicated by president Adams, by the hands of secretary Otis, to the senate, was, as above remarked, essentially mutilated, *and on the specific point which required explanation, the case of major Burrows*.

Together with the mutilated copy of General Washington's letter, president Adams sent to the senate what purported to be a copy of col. Smith's explanatory letter, before mentioned ; but so mutilated as to be reduced from eight pages to less than four, according to the copies of both in my hands ; every part respecting Burrows being omitted. But, besides the mutilations in both of these *singular copies*, there were a few interpolations ; some to amend the style, and others to give a fairer aspect to Smith's explanations. By whom these alterations and amendments were made, does not appear. Col. Smith could not have been so indiscreet ; for he had transmitted genuine copies, with other papers (ten in all) to the president of the senate, Mr. Jefferson, to be laid before that body ; but which Mr. Jefferson sent to Mr. Morris, chairman of the committee, as appears by his letter of December 15, 1800.

Such instances of reprehensible management, as these documents exhibited, it was obviously supposed, would not be suffered to remain on the files of the senate. President Adams did withdraw them, and (as the information rests on my memory) the very next day. Apprehensive of this, some of the senators, by diligent application, and sitting up at night, took copies of them. These copies have been fifteen or twenty years in my possession, unseen till now ; and no part of them might ever have seen the light, but for Mr. Adams's malicious calumnies, respecting my conduct in relation to Smith, in his letters to Cunningham ; *intended, with his*

other calumnies, eventually to be published ; to the mortification of my children and children's children—of many affectionate relatives—and of numerous respectable friends, so long as my name should be remembered.

I leave the reader to his own reflections on this management of president Adams to obtain the senate's approbation of his son-in-law, col. Smith, to be surveyor of the customs at New York ; only remarking, that the nomination appears to have taken place without the privity of the secretary of the treasury, to whose department the matter belonged. To the application of the committee for information, the secretary (in his letter of Dec. 26, 1800) answered, "I possess no information respecting the nomination which the president of the United States has been pleased to make of William S. Smith, Esq. to be surveyor for the district of New York, and "inspector of the revenue for the ports in that district."

The very serious instances of private misconduct, affecting directly col. Smith's integrity as a man, referred to in general Washington's letter, and the specific case respecting major Burrows, to which Smith ascribes the negative to his nomination as adjutant general, were unknown to me when I expressed to some senators my opinion that it was not expedient to confer on Smith that confidential office ; although, by the documents before me, I find those "serious instances" were known in New York two years before ; and hence, doubtless, the negative votes of many of the senators may be accounted for ; although Mr. Adams has been pleased, for the purpose of reproach, to ascribe to me importance and influence enough to determine the votes of the senate : he says, that I "got "Smith negatived." That opinion of mine rested wholly on the information already intimated, accidentally given me, three or four years before, by a gentleman of fair character, with whom I was acquainted. This was, col. Smith's unfaithfulness in a trust of magnitude committed to him by sir William Pulteney, a wealthy Englishman.

Having introduced the serious charge against Smith, in general Washington's letter, but which he said might possibly admit of a fair explanation, candour requires that I should notice what Smith said. He roundly denies, but with too much bluster, that he had "knowingly" pledged property to Burrows which was before conveyed to Mr. Constable ; and says it was by a mere mistake, an inadvertence, that his titles to some real estate, already conveyed to Constable, were produced to Burrows's counsel, as of property still his own ; and which, by that means, was included with other real estate then conveyed to Burrows ; to whom, however, it made a difference of ten thousand dollars loss ; and Smith had no other property to give as a substitute. It is not a little remarkable, that Smith should have *forgotten* the conveyance (not of long standing—perhaps a year or two) of city lots in New York, to Constable, of the value of ten thousand dollars ; though the thing is *possible*.

But this explanatory letter of Smith's—if it deserve the name—is marked with ingratitude, and replete with misrepresentations, respecting major Burrows; as any one would perceive on the perusal of the candid statement of the latter to the senate's committee, furnished at their request. Its great length necessarily excludes it from this Review.

After all that Burrows could obtain of Smith, towards the large sums he had been obliged to pay for him, Smith remained deeply his debtor. Burrows then commenced a suit against him, with a view to get hold of any property of his which might be discovered. Smith found bail; but the bail being alarmed, they insisted on Smith's relieving them, by surrendering himself to the sheriff; who must have committed him to jail. In this forlorn situation, Smith wrote to Burrows, praying to be relieved; for he was then going from camp to New-York, to save his bail. That generous-hearted man, totally ruined as he had been by Smith, instantly relieved him; saying, he would rather burn his bond than disgrace or injure him. General Hamilton wrote to Burrows for the same purpose; and, as the letter is not a long one, and has, besides its kindness, some pleasantry in it, I give it entire; the rather, because Mr. Adams represents Hamilton (ridiculous as is the idea) to have been jealous of Smith's superior military talents, and his enemy.

GENERAL HAMILTON'S LETTER TO MAJOR BURROWS.

" DEAR SIR,

" *New-York, March 10, 1800.*

" The anxiety of col. Smith's bail to your suit had like to have shut him up yesterday in our prison. The good nature of col. Troup* interposed to save him from the disgrace. You would have been sorry if it had happened—because you are not vindictive, and because it would utterly have ruined him, without doing you the least good. Many considerations induce me to second the advice you will receive from col. Troup—namely, to accept *John Doe* and *Richard Roe*, characters of ancient renown in the law, for your bail, and to proceed to judgment on that basis. If Smith has any real estate, that will secure it; and as to his body, it had better continue fat and jolly, to present a good front to his country's enemies, than to be sent to pine and grow meagre in a nasty jail. Adieu.

Your's truly,

A. HAMILTON."

I have but slightly adverted to col. Smith's unfaithfulness in the trust he accepted from Sir William Pulteney. I am now possessed of particular and authentic details of his gross mismanagement (to use a gentle term) of the property of that gentleman, and of governor Hornby; together, amounting to sixty thousand pounds sterling (equal to 266,400 dollars) committed to Smith, to be applied (on very liberal commissions) to their use, in the United States; where advantageous speculations presented, in the purchase of funded debt, bank stock, and new lands; but of which Smith made no re-

* Col. Troup was major Burrows's counsel.

turns. The whole was so soon dissipated, that in 1796 he began to borrow money; and before the close of that year he ruined his friend Burrows. The agents of Pulteney and Hornby gathered something from the wrecks of the property acquired by Smith with their funds.

I forbear to say more on this subject; what I have stated being sufficient to show the substantial correctness of the information on which I thought myself bound to interfere, to prevent his obtaining the office of adjutant general.

The statement I have here made suggests the following questions. Can it be supposed that Mr. Adams was ignorant of col. Smith's conduct in relation to the funds of Pulteney and Hornby? If not uninformed, what can be offered to justify his nominating him to an office in the *Revenue* department of the United States? And why was the nomination made (as it seems to have been, without the privity of the secretary of the treasury?)

Col. Smith lost his office in the revenue department in the following manner:

The name of general Miranda was familiar in the United States, at one period of Mr. Jefferson's presidency. He was a Spaniard, born (as I understood) in one of the Spanish American provinces. He had been in France, at one period of her revolution; and, serving in her armies, in the rank of major general, barely escaped the guillotine, when it was so common to cut off the heads of their military commanders. After this, Miranda came to America, and visited the city of Washington, where he spent some time. From thence he repaired to New-York, and there engaged practically in a project of revolutionizing one of the Spanish provinces. A band of Americans, encouraged perhaps by visions of wealth to be acquired in the country of silver and gold, were induced to embark with him in the expedition. Col. Smith, then surveyor of the customs for the New-York district, aided Miranda, in forwarding the enterprise; and, if I do not mistake, permitted one of his sons to go with him. This wild, because so premature a project, and so deficient in means, necessarily failed, and the Americans were made prisoners. The Spanish minister complained of this outrage against the territory of a nation with whom the United States were at peace. The thing was notorious. To appease the Spaniard, president Jefferson deprived Smith of his office; and the expedition having been set on foot, and the means for it prepared, within the United States, in violation of an express law of the union, Smith was prosecuted for a breach of it. His apology for engaging in it was, that Miranda informed him, that Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison approved of his plan. This was stated by Smith, soon after he had been deprived of his office, in a long letter to his brother-in-law, J. Q. Adams, then in the senate of the United States. Smith, thinking that in Miranda's information gentlemen would find an excuse for his engaging in the expedition, desired the letter might be shown; and Mr. Adams put it into my hands to read.

SECTION VI.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

In Mr. Hamilton's "Letter on the Public Conduct and Character" of John Adams, president of the United States," published in 1800, prior to the election of president and vice-president, to take place in December of that year, Mr. Adams is censured for his various measures which resulted in the institution (in February, 1799) of a mission to France, to negotiate a treaty with her government. This last measure, suddenly taken, without the previous knowledge of a single federalist, in or out of the government, occasioned universal surprise. A decided majority of the nation had been roused to a just resistance of French aggressions. Success attended the vigorous measures of the United States; French armed vessels were captured; and our commerce received protection. A continuance of the same spirited measures would naturally increase the public ardour.

In this state of things, Mr. Hamilton expressed his belief, that there was a real alteration in public opinion; and, hence, that a negotiation to restore peace and a friendly intercourse with France, might be more safely and advantageously conducted at Philadelphia than at Paris; without hazard of dangerous intrigues by any French minister who should be sent to the United States. Mr. Adams takes this occasion to say not only that Hamilton's conceptions of public opinion were erroneous, but intimates that *he was incapable of judging correctly in the case*; for which he assigns these reasons—"That he was born and bred in the West Indies, till he "went to Scotland for education, where he spent his time in a seminary of learning till seventeen years of age; *after which, no man ever acquired a national character*; then entered a college at New-York, from whence he issued into the army an aid de camp. In "these situations he could scarcely acquire the opinions, feelings "or principles of the American people."* This quotation presents a statement marked with Mr. Adams's usual incorrectness; and his inference from his assumed facts is on a par with his statement. To exhibit his errors, and at the same time gratify the reader, I will subjoin a sketch of Mr. Hamilton's early life.

This eminent man, the son of a Scotch merchant, was born in the island of Nevis, in the West Indies; and, as soon as he was old enough to be so employed, became a clerk in the counting house of Nicholas Cruger, a merchant from New-York, who was settled in the island of St. Croix. Boy as he was, the consciousness of a superior intellect satisfied him that a merchant's store was not the proper place for the exertion of his talents. When past the age of thirteen years, he was sent to New-York for his education. After the preparatory school instruction, he entered the college in that

* Letter XII, May 26, 1809, published in the Boston Patriot.

city. The controversy between the British Colonies and the Mother Country employed, at that period, the tongues and the pens of the most eminent men in America. Hamilton, though engaged in his collegiate exercises, was not an unobserving spectator of the passing scenes.

"In this contest with Great Britain (says Dr. Mason) which called forth every talent and every passion, Hamilton's juvenile pen asserted the claims of the Colonies, against writers from whom it would derogate to say that they were merely respectable. An unknown antagonist, whose thrust was neither to be repelled nor parried, excited inquiry; and when he began to be discovered, the effect was so apparently disproportioned to the cause, that his papers were ascribed to a statesman who then held a happy sway in the councils of his country, who has since rendered her most essential services, and who still lives to adorn her name.* But the truth could not long be concealed. The powers of Hamilton created their own evidence; and America saw, with astonishment, a lad of seventeen in the rank of her advocates, at a time when her advocates were patriots and sages."†

In the year 1775, after the commencement of hostilities, "Hamilton attached himself to one of the uniform companies of militia then forming in the city for the defence of the country, and devoted much time and attention to their exercises. In the early part of 1776, he received, from the provincial congress of New-York, the appointment of captain of one of the independent companies of artillery."§ "It was while he was training this company, that, for the first time, he was seen by general Greene; to whose discerning eye something more appeared in the conduct of the young captain than was ordinarily exhibited in the parade exercises of that office."|| Near the close of the campaign of 1776, Hamilton was introduced into general Washington's family, as an aid de camp. In this situation he continued until the winter of 1780-1. In 1782-3, he was a delegate from the state of New-York in the congress of the United States. It was while a member of that body that he saw the letters and communications from our ministers at European courts, and among them those of John Adams, then minister plenipotentiary to the States of Holland, and one of the commissioners for negotiating a peace with Great Britain. These negotiations were carried on at Paris, to which city Mr. Adams came from the Hague. Mr. Jay, already there, had taken certain decisive preliminary steps, without the concurrence of Dr. Franklin, our resident minister in France, and another of the peace com-

* John Jay.

† Col. Nicholas Fish, a fellow student of Hamilton's, informs me that he was about eighteen; and that he saw some of Hamilton's essays before they went to the press.

‡ Doctor Mason's oration on the death of Hamilton.

§ Letter of December 26, 1823, from colonel Fish.

|| Judge Johnson's Life of Greene.

missioners. Franklin, caressed by the French, was disposed implicitly to obey an instruction from congress, wholly different in spirit from former acts of that body, and unworthy of its well-earned public reputation. The object of that instruction was, to submit the terms of the treaty of peace with Great Britain absolutely to the French court, excepting in the single article of our independence. This instruction was obtained, undoubtedly, through the influence of the French minister to the United States, the count de la Luzerne, and of the able secretary of legation, Mr. Marbois. Had this instruction been implicitly obeyed, and had the British government concurred with the plans of the French court, the fisheries, the territory west of the Allegany mountain, and the navigation of the Mississippi, would have been lost to the United States. Mr. Jay, with the foresight, wisdom, firmness and patriotism which have always distinguished him, resisted: he laid aside his instructions, and alone commenced the negotiation, in a manner to do honour to an able, upright and independent American citizen. Mr. Adams came to Paris: his views coincided with Mr. Jay's; and, eventually, Dr. Franklin co-operated with them. Peace was made on terms advantageous beyond the most sanguine expectations; notwithstanding which, an attempt was made by the members under French influence—for there was then, as there has been since, a French party in congress—to censure the commissioners; but it failed; and praise instead of censure was bestowed on them. Hamilton, “dreading the preponderance of foreign influence, as the natural “disease of a popular government, was struck at the appearance, “in the very cradle of our republic, of a party actuated by an un-“due complaisance to foreign power; and resolved at once to re-“sist this bias in our affairs;” “a resolution (says Hamilton) which “has been the chief cause of the persecution I have endured in the “subsequent stages of my political life.”*

The agency of Mr. Adams in the peace negotiation made a favourable impression on the mind of Hamilton, but not without alloy. A scrutiny of Mr. Adams's several communications to Congress produced in the mind of Hamilton the following result: He says, “I then adopted an opinion, which all my subsequent experience “has confirmed, that he is of an imagination sublimated and eccen-“tric; propitious neither to the regular display of sound judgment, “nor to steady perseverance in a systematic plan of conduct; and “I began to perceive, what has been since too manifest, that to this “defect are added the unfortunate foibles of a vanity without “bounds, and a jealousy capable of discolouring every object.”† I greatly mistake if the reader has not found, in this Review, abundant confirmation of the correctness of Hamilton's opinion.

It was in the year 1777, that I first saw Hamilton, and perceived

* Hamilton's Letter on the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, President of the United States.

† The same Letter.

his importance in the military family of general Washington. The subsequent acts of his public life, and the eminent and disinterested services he rendered to the United States, inspired me with the highest ideas of his talents and worth. As an aid de camp to the commander in chief, he saw the principal operations of the main army during four years; but had no command of troops, except of a detachment at the siege of Yorktown, with which he stormed and took a redoubt. A man of genius, however, will promptly grasp any subject; while a common mind is learning the rudiments, which, by slow degrees, are to conduct him to the knowledge of it. When, therefore, in 1798, a small army was to be raised, in addition to our peace establishment, I had no hesitation as to the person best qualified to command it. Of the citizens of the United States *who had seen service*, I knew not one to place in competition with him. It was while I was in this state of mind, that the following dialogue took place between Mr. Adams and me.

Mr. Adams.—"Whom shall we appoint commander in chief?"—"Colonel Hamilton." Mr. Adams made no reply. On another day he repeated the same question, and I gave him the same answer: he did not reply. On another day he for the third time asked me, "Whom shall we appoint commander in chief?" and the third time I answered, "Colonel Hamilton." "O no!" replied Mr. Adams, "it is not his turn by a great deal; I would sooner appoint Gates, or Lincoln, or Morgan." Instantly I rejoined to this effect: "General Morgan is here a member of congress, now very sick, apparently with one foot in the grave; certainly a very brave and meritorious officer, in our revolutionary war; and perhaps his present sickness may be the consequence of the hardships and sufferings to which he was then subjected; but, if he were in full health, the command of a brigade would be deemed commensurate with his talents. As for Gates, he is now an old woman; and Lincoln is always asleep."* Mr. Adams made no reply.

* My remark on the military characters of the gentlemen named by Mr. Adams, whom he would prefer to Hamilton for the command of the army, may perhaps be thought not quite so respectful to the president of the United States as became the dignity of his station. But if it was frankness in excess, it will at least show that I was not inclined to "mask" my opinions. My remark was instantaneous, but calm. Mr. Adams has totally misrepresented my character. All my life long I have been so accustomed freely to express my opinions, that some of my friends have occasionally regretted that I was so little *reserved*; that I did not conceal my sentiments, when, though correct, they might give offence; in a word, that I did not sometimes wear a "mask."—I meant no reproach to Lincoln. His lethargic habit was a constitutional infirmity. When I made the winter campaign, in 1776-7, with the Massachusetts militia under his command, he told me, that prior to the war, when he represented the town of Hingham in the legislature, he used to ride home (a distance, then, of 16 to 20 miles) every Saturday night, on horseback, and commonly slept half the way. It was easy for him to fall asleep at any time, when in a sitting posture. In other respects he was a vigilant officer. But at this time he was a cripple from a wound received in the revolutionary war, and of an advanced age.

Washington being, on this occasion, appointed commander in chief, the secretary of war (M'Henry) was directed to carry his commission to Mount Vernon. Knowing Mr. Adams's aversion to Hamilton, and apprehensive that he would either not be called into service, or if nominated to any office, that it would be in a rank so much below his merit that he would not and ought not to accept it, I took the liberty of writing to general Washington the following letter.*

"Philadelphia, July 6, 1798, 11 o'clock at night.

"SIR—My attachment to my country, and my desire to promote its best interests, I trust, have never been equivocal; and at this time I feel extreme anxiety that our army should be organized in the most efficient manner. The enemy whom we are preparing to encounter, veterans in arms, led by able and active officers, and accustomed to victory, must be met by the best blood, talents, energy and experience that our country can produce. Great military abilities are the portion but of few men, in any nation, even the most populous and war-like. How very few, then, may we expect to find in the United States! In them the arrangements should be so made that not one might be lost.

"There is one man who will gladly be your second, but who will not, I presume, because I think he ought not to be the second to any other military commander in the United States. You too well know colonel Hamilton's distinguished ability, energy and fidelity to apply my remark to any other man. But to ensure his appointment, I apprehend the weight of your opinion may be necessary. From the conversation that I and others have had with the president, there appears to be a disinclination to place colonel Hamilton in what we think is his proper station, and that alone in which we suppose he will serve—the *Second* to you, and the *Chief* in your absence. In any war, and especially in such a war as now impends, a commander in chief ought to know and have a confidence in the officers most essential to ensure success to his measures. In a late conversation with the president, I took the liberty to observe, that the army in question not being yet raised, the only material object to be contemplated in the early appointment of the commander in chief would be, that he might be consulted, because he ought to be satisfied, in the choice of the principal officers who should serve under him.

"If any considerations should prevent your taking the command of the army, I deceive myself extremely if you will not think that it should be conferred on colonel Hamilton. And in this case it may be equally necessary, as in the former, that you should intimate your opinion to the president. Even colonel Hamilton's political enemies, I believe, would repose more confidence in him than in any other military character that can be placed in competition with him.

"This letter is in its nature confidential, and therefore can procure me the displeasure of no one: but the appointment of colonel Hamilton, in the manner suggested, appears to me of such vast importance to the welfare of the country, that I am willing to risk any consequences of my frank and honest endeavours to secure it. On this ground I assure myself you will pardon the freedom of this address.

I am, with perfect respect,

Sir, your most obedient servant,

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

"P. S. Mr. M'Henry is to set off to-morrow, or on Monday, bearing your commission.

"General Washington."

* I desire it may be noticed, that when I wrote this letter, I had had no sort of communication with Hamilton on the subject: it was a spontaneous act on my part to secure his services to the country.

To this letter, I was favoured with a long and confidential answer, dated July 11, in which the general went into a consideration of the kind of warfare to be expected, in case of an invasion by the French, and to which the military arrangements should have relation. The following paragraph is the only one I feel at liberty to introduce; and this, because important in justification of my conduct on the occasion.

"Of the abilities and fitness of the gentleman you have named for a high command in the *provisional army*, I think as you do, and that his services ought to be secured at *almost* any price. What the difficulties are that present themselves to the mind of the president, in opposition to this measure, I am entirely ignorant; but in *confidence*, and with the frankness you have disclosed your own sentiments on this occasion, I will unfold mine, under the view I have taken of the prospect before us; and shall do it concisely."

I was also happy in finding my ideas on this subject coincident with those of Mr. Jay, who was then governor of New-York. In his letter to me, dated July 18, 1798, he said, "Being of the number of those who expect a severe war with France *the moment she makes peace with Britain*, I feel great anxiety that nothing may be omitted to prepare for it;"—and then, glancing at the kind of generals we should have to contend with, Mr. Jay proceeded—"I cannot conceal from you my solicitude that the late secretary of the treasury" [Hamilton] "may be brought forward in a manner corresponding with his talents and services. It appears to me that his former military station and character, taken in connexion with his late important place in the administration, would justify measuring his rank by his merit and value."

The unexampled insults and injuries inflicted by France on the government and people of the United States, as herein before described, were sufficient, an impartial observer would suppose, to rouse the spirit of every American citizen to a determined resistance, and to repel force by force. But this unhappily was not the case: many of our citizens appeared more inclined to criminate their own government than that of France. There was, however, a decided majority well disposed to provide the means of protecting our commerce, and defending our country. Our treaties with France, grossly violated on her part, ceased to be obligatory on the United States; and congress declared them to be void. Naval hostilities were authorized by an act of congress, for the purpose of capturing all French armed vessels. Several of these were taken; and our commerce received protection.

In this state of things, apprehensions were entertained that a formal war with France might ensue. A peace between her and England, for which the party (with the celebrated Mr. Fox at its head) in opposition to the government, were zealously contending, would remove the only obstruction to an invasion of our country by a French fleet and army. Under these circumstances, a prudent foresight justified and required the raising of a small army, as

a suitable preparatory measure of defence. It would be a *nucleus*, around which, should it become necessary, additional forces might be collected, to whom the previous training of the former would facilitate the speedy acquisition of the knowledge of discipline, to qualify them for actual service. Accordingly, congress authorized the raising of twelve regiments of infantry and six troops of cavalry, in addition to the small peace establishment. But the same party in our country, which had before steadily opposed the federal administration, resisted the present measure. Indeed, no inconsiderable portion of our citizens appeared willing to make any sacrifice to France, although at the expense of the honour as well as the interests of their own country. For this reason, especially, it was deemed expedient to place in the command of the army its most popular military citizen; and on Washington it was accordingly conferred. This policy was doubtless correct. But, for myself, I thought only of that man of eminent talents who had been in service during nearly the whole of our revolutionary war, and the greater part of the time in general Washington's military family: this was colonel Hamilton. I knew Washington's advanced age, and his strong predilection for a retired and rural life. He had himself avowed it. I knew that so long before as 1783, when he resigned to congress his military commission, he manifested a determination never again to appear in office on the national theatre.* And after he retired from the presidency, I had not contemplated any future crisis in the affairs of our country, which would render it proper to interrupt his repose, and call him from that retirement to the field.†

The secretary of war, when charged with Washington's commission, was instructed by the president to consult the general as to the principal officers to be appointed to the army; and he transmitted, from Mount Vernon, by the mail, the general's list, containing the names of gentlemen who had served in the revolutionary army, and designated the stations in which they should be placed. At the head of this list, and in the following order, were the names of

Alexander Hamilton, inspector general and major general;

Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, major general;

Henry Knox, major general.

And in this order they were nominated to the senate. When the nominations were taken up for consideration, some of the senators, who knew Mr. Adams's antipathy to Hamilton, proposed (as I was

* "I here offer my commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life," were his words. *Congress Journal*, Dec. 23, 1783.

† How distressing it was to him to be called forth at the period here referred to, cannot be more forcibly expressed than in his own words: "If a crisis should arrive, when a sense of duty, or a call from my country, should become so imperious as to leave me no choice, I should prepare for relinquishment, and go with as much reluctance from my present peaceful abode, as I should go to the tombs of my ancestors."—Letter from the general in answer to col. Hamilton's of May 19, 1798, in *Marshall's Life of Washington*, vol. v. p. 748.

at the time informed) that they should act on the nomination of Hamilton, and postpone their decision on the other two till the next day; lest, if all were approved on the same day, in which case all their commissions would bear the same date, Mr. Adams should derange that order, and raise Pinckney and Knox above Hamilton. But it was answered, that it was the constant usage,* that persons nominated and approved, on the same day, to the same grade of office, should take the rank in the order in which they were nominated and approved; and that surely Mr. Adams would not violate that established rule. So the senate approved of all the three nominations on the same day.†

For some cause or other—I supposed under the impulse of the irritation occasioned by the negative put by the senate on his son-in-law, Col. Smith, as before related—Mr. Adams very suddenly, and without apprising the heads of departments of his intention, pushed off for Quincy, the place of his residence near Boston; leaving his “incompetent secretaries”‡ at the seat of government, to perform, besides the ordinary executive duties, those arising from the acts of the very important session of congress just ended. There was at that time no navy department; and the issuing of commissions of letters of marque had been assigned to the department of state. These being prepared, I went to the president’s house, by nine in the morning (the day I do not recollect) to obtain his signature; when, to my astonishment, his steward informed me that he had already set off for Quincy. I hastened back to my office, made up a packet of blank commissions, and forwarded them by mail to New York, to the care of one of his sons then living in that city. There the packet came to the president’s hands. He signed the commissions and returned them to me. But this caused a delay of two or three days, when a number of merchant vessels, in different ports, armed and manned for letters of marque, and ready for sea, were waiting for their commissions.

The secretary of war made out the commissions for Hamilton first, Pinckney second, and Knox third, major general, and sent them to Quincy, for the president’s signature. He wrote to the secretary, that in his opinion Knox was entitled to rank as first major general, Pinckney as the second, and Hamilton as the third; and directed, that if general Washington should concur in that opinion, he should conform the commissions to that order. Possessed of this information, and having already interested myself to secure to Hamilton the first place after the commander in chief, I addressed, on the first of September, a second letter to Washing-

* Grounded on a resolve of the old congress, January 4, 1776.

† Congress had already adjourned, and the senators, impatient to depart, remained in session only to pass on the military nominations. It was then the middle of July.

‡ Such, I remember to have been informed, was the term by which he sometimes designated the heads of departments.

ton; in which I examined at large the alleged reasons for giving Knox the precedence, and demonstrated (as I thought) their invalidity. The general honoured me with his answer, dated the 9th. It was a long letter, in relation to the new army. The following extracts, pointing most directly to the present subject, are all that I need introduce.

"Your private letter of the first instant came duly to hand, and I beg you to be persuaded that no apology will ever be necessary for any confidential communications you may be disposed to entrust me with.

"In every public transaction of my life, my aim has been to do that which appeared to me to be most conducive to its weal. Keeping this object always in view, no local considerations, or private gratifications, incompatible therewith, can ever render information displeasing to me from those in whom I have confidence, and who, I know, have the best opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of facts in matters which may be interesting to our country, and essential for myself as its servant.

"Having troubled you with this exordium and egotism, I do not only thank you for the full and judicious observations relative to the discontents of general Knox, as being appointed junior major general in the augmented corps, but I shall do the same for your further occasional remarks on this, or any other subject which may be interesting and proper for me to know; that I may thereby regulate my own conduct in such a manner as to render it beneficial and acceptable to the community, in matters which depend on correct information not in my power to obtain in the ordinary course, without aid."

The general then mentions his early writing to general Knox, stating the *principle* upon which the arrangement of the major generals had been made; and that he was not a little surprised to find in his answer an expression of great dissatisfaction at the measure. General Washington replied, in order to conciliate Knox; but in vain.

Before the secretary of war could have written to and received an answer from general Washington, respecting the order in which the three major generals should take rank, another letter was received from the president, peremptorily requiring him to make out their commissions in the order of Knox, Pinckney, Hamilton. Upon which I again wrote to general Washington. The subsequent decisive proceeding on *his* part finally induced the president (certainly to his extreme mortification) to recur to the old rule, from which he ought never to have departed; and the commissions were made out according to the general's arrangement. The president's departure from it was a violation of the general condition on which Washington accepted the chief command.

Several motives for this incorrect conduct of president Adams may be assigned. Primarily, his unrelenting hatred of Hamilton; whom, utterly regardless of the public interest in his services, he would have driven from the army, by degrading him from the rank to which his merit and actual appointment entitled him. In the next place, he would have expected from Knox a degree of subserviency to his views which was not to be expected from Ham-

ilton. Lastly, he had received from Knox a flattering letter, expressing his unqualified admiration of the president's measures. And to a man of Mr. Adams's unbounded vanity, nothing could be so grateful, nothing so influential, as flattery. In this letter, Knox suggested a variety of measures, and on a liberal scale, which he thought should be taken, effectually to resist and defeat an invasion by the French; and he concluded with *a tender of his humble abilities for any sort of service to which they should be thought equal.**

After such an expression of the humble sense of his own abilities, and of his readiness to serve in any station to which they should be deemed adequate, it must surprise every one to find that his *humility* was offended because he was not placed *above* all other officers, Washington only excepted: but such was the fact; and for that reason he refused to serve at all. In a letter to me, general Knox said, "The present view of the subject is, that Mr. Hamilton's talents have been estimated upon a scale of comparison so transcendent, that all his seniors in rank and years of the late army have been degraded by his elevation. Whether this estimate has been perfectly correct, or whether the consequences will be for the happiness of the country, time will discover."

It is the more remarkable that Knox should insist on the first rank as a major general, seeing the arrangement had been made by general Washington, for whom he always manifested the most profound respect; and the general always appeared to me to entertain towards Knox a peculiar and very strong attachment. In a letter to Hamilton, in reference to the arrangement of him and Pinckney, Washington said, "With respect to my friend general Knox, whom I love and esteem, I have ranked him below you both." If there was in the revolutionary army but *one* officer whom he *loved*, Knox was that one. In this case we see exemplified the sentiment expressed to me by the general in his letter of Sept. 9, before quoted—*That in every public transaction of his life, the public weal, and not private gratifications, governed him.* No person acquainted with Hamilton and Knox could hesitate a moment in deciding to whom the preference was due.

Mr. Adams has been unwearied in his attempts to degrade Hamilton in the eyes of his fellow-citizens: he has been so indiscreet as to deny him, what all the world besides allow him, very eminent talents. According to Mr. Adams, his son-in-law col. Smith, in the military line, was much superior to Hamilton: and having, in many letters published in the Boston Patriot in 1809, labouring to vindicate the mission to France instituted in 1799, commented on various passages of Hamilton's letter of 1800, when Adams was a second time a candidate for the presidency, he concludes his 16th letter with these words: "I have no more to say on this great subject.

* I have a copy of this letter, taken from the original, which, by Mr. Adams's direction, I deposited in the war-office.

"Indeed I am weary of exposing puerilities that would disgrace "the awkwardest boy at college." After this shot, the following comparison of Mr. Gerry and Hamilton, as financiers, will occasion no surprise.

In his 13th letter, dated May 29, 1809, published in the Boston Patriot, Mr. Adams, speaking of his favourite, Gerry, as one of the ministers to negotiate with the French republic, against whom he supposes prejudices had been entertained, says, "No man had a "greater share in propagating and diffusing these prejudices against "Mr. Gerry than Hamilton; *whether he had formerly conceived jealousies against him as a rival candidate for the secretaryship of the treasury*: for Mr. Gerry was a financier, and had been employed "for years on the treasury in the old congress, and a most indefatigable member too:"—"that committee had laid the foundation for the present system of the treasury, and had organized it "almost as well:"—"I knew that the officers of the treasury, in "Hamilton's time, dreaded to see him rise in the house upon any "question of finance, because they said he was a man of so much "influence, that they always feared he would discover some error, "or carry some point against them:—or whether he [Hamilton] "feared that Mr. Gerry would be president of the United States "before him, I know not." !!!

It appears by Cunningham's letters to Mr. Adams, that the latter had written two concerning Hamilton, filled with matters of such a character that he would not leave them in Cunningham's hands; he insisted on their being returned to him, and they were returned: but their contents are intimated in Cunningham's answers. The accusations are of atrocious vices. One, that Hamilton was totally destitute of *integrity*. The whole of the world where Hamilton was known will acquit him of this charge, and with scorn repel the foul calumny. And every reader of this Review will have seen the licentiousness of Mr. Adams's pen, and how little credit is due to any of his statements concerning those who are the subjects of his envy, hatred or revenge.

In Cunningham's letter XXXVII, to Mr. Adams, dated May 6, 1809, he states, that Mr. Adams informed him, that the testimony of general Washington in Hamilton's favour was given under a threatening of a public exposure of his mistakes. "You, sir, know," says Cunningham, "what authority I have for the declaration—" "general Washington was overawed with a menace." In a note Cunningham adds, "Mr. Adams is my authority for all this, and more." Every man who knew Washington will pronounce this, whoever might be the author, an atrocious falsehood. In the conscious purity of intention in all his actions, while he entertained a modest opinion of himself, he would not have endured such an insult from any human being; and all who knew Hamilton will pronounce him utterly incapable of offering it.

Here I conclude all that I think proper for me to say respecting Mr. Hamilton, in regard to Mr. Adams's reproaches, in his correspondence with Cunningham. His animadversions on Hamilton, in his letters published in the same year (1809) in the Boston Patriot, which occupy nearly fifty pages in octavo, so far as the same may merit any notice, will have the attention of Hamilton's biographer. That the work is not yet commenced, or in progress, is a subject of deep regret.

But as Hamilton has formerly been accused of cherishing highly aristocratic views of government, and, as a member of the general convention which formed the constitution of the United States, would have infused that spirit into it, I subjoin his letter to me on that subject. It is an answer to one I wrote to him, stating that it had been asserted, "that in the general convention he had proposed, *“that the president of the United States, and the senators, should be chosen for life;* and that his accusers alleged that this was intended as an introduction to monarchy." On this accusation I made the following remark: "If the proposition was offered in the convention, your friends will know to what motives to ascribe it; and that, whatever form of government you may have suggested for consideration, the public welfare, and the permanent liberty of your country, were not the less objects of pursuit with you, than with the other members of the convention." On this subject I requested information.

Hamilton's answer is too valuable to be lost. By introducing it into this Review, it may be preserved long enough to be used by his biographer, while in the mean time it will gratify surviving friends who deeply respect his memory. I give it here, verbatim, from the original now before me.

"New-York, September 16, 1803.

"My Dear Sir,—I will make no apology for my delay in answering your inquiry some time since made, because I could offer none which would satisfy myself. I pray you only to believe that it proceeded from any thing rather than want of respect or regard. I shall now comply with your request.

"The highest toned propositions, which I made in the convention, were for a president, senate and judges during good behaviour—a house of representatives for three years. Though I would have enlarged the legislative power of the general government, yet I never contemplated the abolition of the state governments; but, on the contrary, they were, in some particulars, constituent parts of my plan.

"This plan was in my conception conformable with the strict theory of a government purely republican; the essential criteria of which are, that the principal organs of the executive and legislative departments be elected by the people, and hold their offices by a *responsible* and *temporary* or *defeasible* tenure.

"A vote was taken on the proposition respecting the executive. Five states were in favour of it; among these Virginia; and though from the manner of voting, by delegations, individuals were not distinguished, it was morally certain, from the known situation of the Virginia members (six in number, two of them, *Mason* and *Randolph*, professing popular doctrines) that Madison must have concurred in the vote of Virginia. Thus, if I sinned against republicanism, Mr. Madison was not less guilty.

"I may truly then say, that I never proposed either a president, or senate, for life; and that I neither recommended nor meditated the annihilation of the state governments.

"And I may add, that in the course of the discussions in the convention, neither the propositions thrown out for debate, nor even those voted in the earlier stages of deliberation, were considered as evidences of a definitive opinion in the proposer or voter. It appeared to me to be in some sort understood, that with a view to free investigation, experimental propositions might be made, which were to be received merely as suggestions for consideration.

"Accordingly it is a fact, that my final opinion was against an executive during good behaviour, on account of the increased danger to the public tranquillity incident to the election of a magistrate of this degree of permanency. In the plan of a constitution, which I drew up while the convention was sitting, and which I communicated to Mr. Madison about the close of it, perhaps a day or two after, the office of President has no greater duration than for three years.

"This plan was predicated upon these bases. 1. That the political principles of the people of this country would endure nothing but republican governments. 2. That, in the actual situation of the country, it was in itself right and proper that the republican theory should have a fair and full trial. 3. That to such a trial it was essential that the government should be so constructed as to give it all the energy and stability reconcileable with the principles of that theory. These were the genuine sentiments of my heart, and upon them I acted.

"I sincerely hope, that it may not hereafter be discovered, that through want of sufficient attention to the last idea, the experiment of republican government, even in this country, has not been as complete, as satisfactory and as decisive as could be wished.

"Very truly, dear sir, your friend and servant,
"TIMOTHY PICKERING, Esq." A. HAMILTON."

SECTION VII.

WASHINGTON.

In this review of Mr. Adams's Correspondence with Cunningham—passing by many things of minor consequence—I have noticed nearly all of his principal reproaches; and shown, I trust satisfactorily, that they are calumnies, and calumnies of the most disgraceful kind; that, in his laboured attempts to justify some important acts of his administration, he has manifested as little regard to truth as to consistency; and that those acts, which he solemnly avers were dictated solely by a sincere and virtuous regard to the public welfare, originated in his unrestrained ambition.—There remain to be noticed two accusations in his letter, No. XVII, November 25, 1808, to Cunningham, where, referring to me, he says, "No man I ever knew had so deep a contempt for Washington. I have had numerous proofs of it from his own lips; yet he appears to the world a devout admirer of him."—*This charge, in every part, I deny.* From Mr. Adams's character, as portrayed in this Review, every impartial reader will see that his accusations can derive no credit from his assertions; that he is capable of making the gross-

est misrepresentations ; and from detached facts, and often from bare suspicions, of drawing unwarrantable inferences, if suited to his purposes at the moment. Some such facts, relating to Washington, he may have heard me mention, though I have no recollection of it ; for those, to which I here refer, were such as entered into occasional conversations between myself and my friends. But whatever they were, the inference of "contempt" is all his own ; and perfectly natural, because corresponding with his own feelings ; as in the instance of which his friend Cunningham reminds him, in his letter, No. LX, January 15, 1810, saying, "In the letter, from "which I have extracted, you observed, that the portrait of *Washington* ought not to shove aside the portraits of *John Hancock* and "Samuel Adams, in Fanueil Hall. Now, to say nothing of Samuel "Adams, what was *John Hancock* ? I will tell you what you your- "self once said of him. In the afternoon of a day in the summer "of 1791, some conversation respecting him led Mrs. Adams to re- "mark, that he was born near your residence—you turned yourself "towards your front door, and pointing to a spot in view, you laugh- "ingly exclaimed, 'Yes ! there's the place where the great gover- "nor *Hancock* was born.' Then, composing your countenance, and "rolling your eye, you went on with these exclamations—' *John* "Hancock ! a man without head and without heart—the mere "shadow of a man, and yet a governor of old Massachusetts !'"— In his answer to this letter, the next day, without questioning the truth of Cunningham's statement, Mr. Adams says, "The corres- "pondence and *conversations* which have passed between us have "been under the confidential seal of secrecy and friendship. Any "violation of it will be a breach of honour and of plighted faith." Other like instances of Mr. Adams's expressed opinion of Wash- ington have come to my knowledge. Yet in official acts, speeches, messages and letters, he was willing to derive to himself some credit as his eulogist.

The "facts" to which I have alluded were military occurrences in the revolutionary war, which fell under my own observation, and which produced an opinion, on some points of his character, in coincidenee with what *I know*, from their own observations to me, were the opinions of general Greene and baron Steuben ; with what I have indubitable reason to know was the opinion of Hamilton ; and also of colonel Reed, adjutant general in 1776, and afterwards president of Pennsylvania. To some of these facts and opinions I have occasionally adverted, when I have heard every military enterprise of moment, during the revolutionary war, ascribed ex-clusively to Washington ; and when the salvation of our country and the establishment of its independence have been attributed to him alone. In these unlimited views concerning Washington I have not concurred. I never believed that the effectual defence of our country, and the final achievement of its independence, rested on any one man. Had this been the case, resistance to the mother-

country would have been madness. Yet I have always thought, and said, that, as the chief command of our armies should be entrusted only to a native citizen, Washington, above all others, was entitled to the preference.

There had been no military school in the colonies, where natives might learn the art of war; nor any occasion or opportunity for colonists to acquire a practical knowledge of it, excepting in the French or seven years' war, which was declared in 1756, and ended in 1763. In that war, numerous provincial forces were employed in conjunction with British regular troops; but only for single campaigns, and as militia, engaged to serve from spring to autumn. And all these transient services ended with the conquest of Canada, in 1759 and 60, which gave peace to our frontiers. The frontiers of Virginia, harassed by Indian incursions from 1754, when Washington commanded the levies of that province, were quieted in 1758; in which year, British troops and colonial militia drove the French from the Ohio. And, at the close of that year, Washington resigned his commission. By his services in that war, he had acquired much military reputation; and his whole life, marked with eminent qualities, left him without a competitor for the chief command, at the commencement of our revolutionary war. Through the whole course of it, he served with a *pure* and *disinterested zeal*, *fortitude* and *magnanimity*, that *were never surpassed in any cause*; and *amidst difficulties and discouragements* that perhaps *were never equalled*. Such a character no one could view with "contempt." In what, then, have I differed from any others, in regard to Washington? I frankly answer—that I did not ascribe to him transcendent talents as well as transcendent virtues. These, combined, would constitute a character that has rarely if ever existed. Washington, far from assuming, uniformly disclaimed it; both when he accepted the command of the army in 1775, and when he received the presidency of the United States in 1789. In these two great acts, deliberately contemplated, and performed with the deepest anxiety, it was manifested, that the highest public employments not being with him objects of ambition, he relinquished the pursuits and endearments of private life, purely in obedience to the voice of his country, to whose service all his faculties were ever devoted. With such feelings, and a painful apprehension of the great responsibility attached to those offices, to accept of them raised still higher his character of exalted patriotism. He consented to hazard his reputation, at momentous crises, when his numerous judicious friends, on whose fidelity and correct opinions he had just reason to rely, assured him that the public voice, as well as the public welfare, demanded the sacrifice of all private considerations.

My general views of Washington's character coincide with those of some who had frequent and intimate opportunities of knowing it, and of some of our most judicious public writers. Among all the cotemporaries of Washington, no man had more or better (I

may say no one had equal) opportunities of knowing Washington, than Alexander Hamilton ; and I presume it will be admitted, that no man was more competent to form a correct judgment of his character. For more than four years, Hamilton was an important member of general Washington's military family, in the revolutionary war ; and six years secretary of the treasury, when Washington was president of the United States ; and his constant correspondent during the rest of his life. Hamilton was too just to detract, and too sincere to flatter. In his well known Letter on the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, he mentions " the incomparably superior weight and transcendent popularity of general Washington"—" the venerated Washington"—" the modest and sage Washington"—" the virtuous and circumspect Washington"—" the dead patriot and hero, the admired and beloved Washington." In the same letter, contrasting the precipitation of president Adams with the deliberate judgment of Washington, he says of the latter, " He consulted much, pondered much, " resolved slowly, resolved surely." And in his letter, consequent on his resignation of the treasury department, in answer to a " very kind" one from Washington, Hamilton says, " I entreat you to be persuaded (not the less for my having been sparing of professions) " that I shall never cease to render a just tribute to those eminent " and excellent qualities which have been already productive of so many blessings to your country."*

I will close my observations respecting Washington with the opinion of that well informed and judicious historian, the late Dr. David Ramsay. In his history of the American Revolution, he writes thus of Washington: " Possessed of a large proportion of common sense directed by a sound judgment, he was better fitted for the exalted station to which he was called, than many others who to greater brilliancy of parts frequently add the eccentricity of original genius."—" His soul, superior to party spirit, to prejudice and illiberal views, moved according to the impulses it received from an honest heart, a good understanding, common sense, and a sound judgment."†

To the correctness of these views of Washington's character, by Hamilton and Ramsay, I give my cordial assent ; while I deny the other part of Mr. Adams's assertion, that " I appeared to the world a devout adorer of him." In truth, I never adored any man ; I never flattered any man ; and I never attempted to appear what I was not ; choosing rather to hazard giving offence, than to practise any sort of prevarication.

In the same letter, No. XVII, and immediately following the preceding charge, Mr. Adams says of me, " No man was a more animated advocate for the French ; yet now he is as zealous for

* Marshall's Life of Washington, vol. v. appendix, p. 28.

† Vol. i. p. 217.

“the English.” As to the former, at the commencement of their revolution, my sentiments corresponded with those of my fellow-citizens generally; rejoicing in the prospect of their establishing a free government, in the place of an unlimited monarchy. To this sentiment there were very few exceptions in the United States. But, in the progress of the revolution, the unexampled atrocities committed at Paris and in other parts of France excited my abhorrence. When at length order was restored, and a republican government was formed, with “checks and balances” which authorized a hope of its permanent establishment, I again rejoiced. But when this new government swerved from republican principles; when its acts were a continued and extensive exhibition of tyranny, injustice and corruption; and especially when these evil dispositions were manifested in unexampled injuries and insults towards the United States and their government, the French rulers, and those who executed their commands, were to me objects of horror and detestation. The honour, under these circumstances, of having continued to cherish French attachments, I cheerfully leave to those who were ambitious of it, and to their new adherents.

With regard to the English, my opposition to their claims, during our controversies with their government, and in the war which succeeded, was constant and uniform. When our independence was established, and peace proclaimed, my enmity ceased. To indulge the sentiment in the declaration of independence, “to hold them, “as we should hold the rest of mankind, *Enemies in War—in Peace, “Friends”*—accorded as well with my inclination as my duty. Without such a temper among the people of any country, and especially in its rulers, permanent peace cannot be expected. Mr. Adams, in his public letters, takes credit to himself as a friend to peace; and, with some ostentation, repeats, as if it were a maxim peculiar to himself, or at least not common, that he always held a state of *neutrality* to be the true policy and the great interest of the United States; yet in various places he utters sentiments tending to engender hostilities with England. Such, no doubt, appeared to him to be the prevalent feeling of his old opponents, the adherents of Mr. Jefferson, with whom he and his son had coalesced. In his letter No. XXVI, February 11, 1809, to Cunningham, he pronounces “Great Britain to be the natural enemy of the United States.” Yet our commercial intercourse with that country is of greater interest to the United States than that with any other country on the globe. It was that intercourse which rapidly enriched our southern and western states, the growers of cotton; and it will continue to add to their wealth and comforts, if not interrupted or embarrassed by our own impolitic restraints. But its benefits are not confined to the cotton-growing states; they extend to every state in the union. A new reason now urges the United States to maintain a friendly connexion with Great Britain: Hers is the only free and independent country in Europe; and Ours the only other country

in the World in a condition to co-operate with Britain in sustaining the cause of liberty on the Earth.

If for entertaining such sentiments as these I shall be visited with reproaches, let them come—I am willing to bear them.

CONCLUSION.

MANY have exclaimed with horror at the breach of faith which has brought to light the CORRESPONDENCE between Mr. Adams and his friend Cunningham; and they concentrate their reproaches on the head of the son who has given it to the public. But what is the real cause of all this horror? Suppose another person had communicated to Cunningham, ingenious dissertations in philosophy, in morals, or in religion, or the animated effusions of a heart warmed with benevolence, but which the modest and retiring author would venture to impart only to a bosom friend, and especially not to be made public during the writer's life; and suppose this friend struck with the beauties and excellencies of the compositions, and convinced of their utility, if made known; would the disclosure of them, by the anticipation of a few years, be thought an unpardonable crime? On the contrary, would it not be deemed a very venial fault? Who would have regretted the opportunity, thus afforded, to bestow on the modest author *present* instead of *posthumous* praise, which all would pronounce his due, and which even he, now entirely satisfied of the merit of his work, could himself enjoy?

But what is the character of the "CORRESPONDENCE?"—An exhibition of the worst passions of the human heart. To the horror-struck censors of the publisher I would say, You think only of the once high standing of Mr. Adams; you see him venerable in years; you read his name associated with some of the most interesting periods of our history, and at length honoured with the highest office our national institutions will admit. All these recollections rush upon the mind, and you are unwilling to loosen the hold they have on your heart. If it were possible, you would shut your eyes against the atrocious calumnies flowing through his pen, and so deeply derogating from the character you have been accustomed to contemplate with delight, and to which you have rendered the grateful homage of your hearts. You are shocked with this new view of his character; but, at the same time, mortified and vexed at the discovery, you pass by the real offender, and pour all your resentment, and expressions of accumulated horror, on the head of the person who has published, *a little prematurely*, the monstrous calumnies which the venerable author had himself prepared for the press. It will be seen, by the note hereto subjoined, that these letters were in truth intended as the posthumous work of president

Adams ; and the publisher has done no more than to anticipate, by perhaps a year or two, its publication ; thereby giving me, what the writer intended to prevent, the opportunity of defending myself during the joint lives of us both.*

I have now brought to a close my Review of the CORRESPONDENCE between Mr. Adams and his relative and friend William Cunningham. In my own defence I have been constrained to examine freely his communications. If faults of a deep die appear, let it be considered, that I only write their history ; and, upon the strictest scrutiny of what I have written, I have discerned no errors. Should any be discovered, I shall readily acknowledge and retract them. Some persons may regret this exhibition of the character of Mr. Adams. Such kind hearts should rather wish that he had not himself *created* the occasion, and rendered it an imperious duty to myself and children, to my friends and to truth, to vindicate my reputation so wantonly assailed. In performing this just act of self-defence, it was impossible to avoid the exhibition I have made of the character of the accuser. If I thus expose his faults to the *world*, I at the same time expose them to *himself* ; in which view, it may be a work of real usefulness. It may excite just reflections ; he may become sensible that he has too long given the reins to his unhallowed passions. With such a temper, and so indulged, will he, on this exposure, have no compunctions feelings ? Whatever censure may rest on the publisher of the Correspondence, a heavier censure must fall on him who furnished the matter for the publication. It is, as I have remarked, *this matter, black with every evil passion, which has excited horror*. It is the *author*, rioting on the characters of the men whom he sacrificed to those passions, that ought to be the real source of horror. Should he be shocked, by this exhibition of his own work, it may produce humility and contrition—Christian virtues, and the indispensable conditions of forgiveness at that Tribunal where the specious but empty pardon of any fellow mortal will be of no avail. For myself, wronged as I have been by Mr. Adams, I ask nothing at his hands. I am now alike indifferent to his praise and his reproach. To me, he is an object, not of resentment, but of pity.

* Mr. Adams commenced his reproaches against me in his letter of Oct. 15, 1808, but enjoined secrecy, in these words : “ What I have said is to remain in your own “ breast. I have no disposition to enter into newspaper controversies with Pickering, or his friends or editors.” In his next letter, Nov. 7, he qualifies his injunction : “ I shall insist that whatever I write to you upon the subject shall be confidential *as long as I live*.” Mr. Adams then proceeds to give full scope to his malevolence, and continues to vent his calumnies until the 7th of June, 1809—a period of seven months ; *certainly* with the expectation and *design*, that *after his death they should be made public*—to illustrate his own character—and to *doom mine to perpetual infamy*.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—*Extracts from the pamphlet called “The Prospect before Us,” exhibiting some of the calumnies against Presidents Washington and Adams, by James Thompson Callender; referred to in page 10.*

“I now return to the tremor of 1787, by which the ‘government of your own choice,’ the federal constitution, was crammed down the gullet of America.”*

“By his own account, therefore, Mr. Washington has been twice a traitor. He first renounced the king of England, and thereafter the old confederation.”

“The extravagant popularity possessed by this citizen,† reflects the utmost ridicule on the discernment of America. He approved of the funding system, the assumption, the national bank; and, in contradiction to his own solemn promise, he authorized the robbery and ruin of the remnants of his own army.”

“Under the old confederation, matters never were, nor could have been, conducted so wretchedly as they actually are and have been under the successive monarchs of Braintree and Mount Vernon.”‡

“Mr. Washington was president of this federal convention: of course he could not plead ignorance of its intention against the erection of a national bank. He swore to support the constitution. Directly after, he ratified the bank law, which drove the ploughshare of paper jobbing through the very midst of his double oath, as a federal citizen, and as president.”

“For all this confusion and iniquity, we must thank Mr. Washington.”

“If Mr. Washington wanted to corrupt the American judges, he could not have taken a more decisive step, than by the appointment of Mr. Jay.

“The proclamation of neutrality does not, therefore, deserve that title. It was a proclamation of ignorance and pusillanimity.”

“Adams and Washington have since been shaping a series of these paper-jobbers into judges and ambassadors. As their whole courage lies in want of shame, these poltroons, without risking a manly and intelligible defence of their own measures, raise an affected yelp against the corruption of the French directory; as if any corruption could be more venal, more notorious, more execrated, than their own. For years together, the United States resounded with curses against them, while the grand lama of federal adoration, the immaculate divinity of Mount Vernon, approved of and subscribed every one of their blackest measures.”

“This speech has a charm that completely unmasks the scandalous hypocrisy of Washington.”

“Mr. Adams has only completed the scene of ignominy which Mr. Washington began.”

“Foremost in whatever is detestable, Mr. Adams feels anxiety to curb the frontier population.”

“This last presidential felony will be buried by Congress in the same criminal silence as its predecessors.”

“In the two first years of his presidency, he has contrived pretences to double the annual expense of government, by useless fleets, armies, sinecures, and jobs of every possible description.”

* If the reader will turn back to pages 23 and 24, he will see Mr. Jefferson’s reproachful censures of the constitution, and of the eminent patriots who formed it.

† Washington.

‡ Meaning Adams and Washington. The township of Quincy, the place of Mr. Adams’s residence, was formerly a part of the township of Braintree.

"By sending these ambassadors to Paris, Mr. Adams and his British faction designed to do nothing but mischief."

"It is happy for Mr. Adams himself, as well as for his country, that he asserted an untruth."

"In the midst of such a scene of profligacy and of usury, the President has persisted, as long as he durst, in making his utmost efforts for provoking a French war."

"When a chief magistrate is, both in his speeches and in his newspapers, constantly reviling France, he can neither expect nor desire to live long in peace with her. Take your choice, then, between Adams, war and beggary, and Jefferson, peace and competency."

Such are some of the calumnies (the "Prospect before Us" contains many more) written and published by James Thompson Callender, in 1800, when the election of a president was pending, Adams and Jefferson being the rival candidates; and such the character of the "book Callender was about to publish," which Mr. Jefferson said, would "inform the thinking part of the nation," and enable these "to set the people to rights."

NOTE B. PAGE 12.

Letter from Mr. Jefferson to Lieutenant Governor Barry, of Kentucky, on the Judiciary.

MONTICELLO, JULY 2, 1822.

"SIR—Your favour of the 15th June is received, and I am very thankful for the kindness of its expressions respecting myself; but it ascribes to me merits which I do not claim. I was one only of a band devoted to the cause of independence, all of whom exerted equally their best endeavours for its success, and have a common right to the merits of its acquisition. So also in the civil revolution of 1801, very many and very meritorious were the worthy patriots who assisted in bringing back our government to its republican track. To preserve it in that, will require unremitting vigilance. Whether the surrender of our opponents, their reception into our camp, their assumption of our name, and apparent accession to our objects, may strengthen or weaken the genuine principles of republicanism, may be a good or an evil, is yet to be seen. I consider the party division of whig and tory the most wholesome which can exist in any government, and well worthy of being nourished, to keep out those of a more dangerous character. We already see the power, installed for life, responsible to no authority (for impeachment is not even a scare-crow) advancing with a noiseless and steady pace to the great object of consolidation; the foundations are deeply laid, by their decisions, for the annihilation of constitutional state rights, and the removal of every check, every counterpoise, to the ingulphing power of which themselves are to make a sovereign part. If ever this vast country is brought under a single government, it will be one of the most extensive corruption, indifferent to, and incapable of a wholesome care over so wide a spread of surface. This will not be borne, and you will have to choose between reformation and revolution. If I know the spirit of this country, the one or the other is inevitable. Before the canker is become inveterate, before its venom has reached so much of the body politic as to get beyond controul, remedy should be applied. Let the future appointments of

judges be for four or six years, and renewable by the President and Senate. This will bring their conduct, at regular periods, under revision and probation, and may keep them in equipoise between the general and special governments. We have erred in this point by copying England, where certainly it is a good thing to have the judges independent of the king; but we have omitted to copy their caution also, which makes a judge removable on the address of both legislative houses. That there should be public functionaries independent of the nation, whatever may be their merit, is a solecism in a republic, of the first order of absurdity and inconsistence.

TH. JEFFERSON."

NOTE B. PAGE 18.

It is forty years since Mr. Jefferson wrote his "Notes on Virginia." In that small volume, (I believe his only work, unless his manual of parliamentary usages he viewed as another) besides answering various questions of a foreigner of distinction, about facts concerning that State, and which Mr. Jefferson's local knowledge and public employments in the district of country which gave him birth, enabled him to answer, he exhibited other facts, to detect the gross errors of some European philosophers, who, for want of due inquiry, had stated, that the various races of animals, and man himself, in the New World, compared with those of the Old World, were greatly inferior in size; and man also in intellect; or, to use Mr. Jefferson's own word, were "belittled." To overthrow this unfounded opinion, and triumphantly, was surely not a difficult task. The various tribes of untutored Indians, with whom the English colonists had frequent intercourse, had given decisive proofs of eminent intellectual powers, and of a natural eloquence which astonished their hearers. Governor Colden, of New-York, in his history of the Iroquois, or Five Nations, published in London in 1747, gave many specimens of the abilities and eloquence of their chiefs. Mr. Jefferson, in his "Notes," furnished the like evidence in the speech of Logan. The late Colonel John Gibson, who served in the war of our revolution, and whose last office, if I mistake not, was that of Secretary of the Territory (now State) of Indiana, informed me, that he was the interpreter of Logan's eloquent speech, above mentioned.

After the decease of Mr. Rittenhouse, President of the American Philosophical Society, established at Philadelphia, Mr. Jefferson was elected to that office. But no communications, literary or philosophical, from him, appear among their subsequent transactions.

NOTE C. PAGE 18.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. ADAMS.

Extracts from a letter, dated August 2, 1822, from T. Pickering to John Adams, formerly President of the United States.

"As no act of the Congress of the Thirteen United American Colonies was so distinguished as that by which their Independence of Great Britain was declared, the most particular history of that transaction

will probably be sought for, not merely as an interesting curiosity, but to do substantial justice to the abilities and energy of the leaders in that great measure."

"By the public journals, it appears, that on the 7th of June, 1776, 'certain resolutions respecting independency were moved and seconded;' and that on the 10th, the first resolution, 'that the United Colonies are and of right ought to be free and Independent States,' was adopted; and the next day the committee for preparing the declaration to that effect was chosen, consisting of 'Mr. Jefferson, Mr. J. Adams, Mr. Franklin, Mr. Sherman, and Mr. R. R. Livingston.' Mr. Jefferson, being first on the list, became the chairman."

"It was in the natural order of proceeding for the committee to meet and discuss the subject; and, after mature deliberation, to decide on the principles or propositions which should constitute the basis of the declaration; and to refer the making of the draught to the chairman, or to a sub-committee."

"Some years ago, a copy of the declaration, as reported to Congress, was put into my hands, by some one of the Lee family. It was in Mr. Jefferson's hand-writing, and enclosed in a short letter from him to R. H. Lee, together with a copy of the declaration as amended in Congress. The amendments consisted chiefly in striking out; and about one-fourth part of the whole was struck out."—"To me, the alterations made in Congress seemed important and substantial amendments."

—"After all, the declaration does not contain many new ideas. It is rather a compilation of facts and sentiments stated and expressed, during the preceding eleven years, by those who wrote and vindicated the rights of the Colonies, including the proceedings of the Congress of 1774; that is, from the year of the stamp act to the commencement of the war. The great merit of any compilation consists in the lucid and forcible arrangement of the matter. The reported declaration was evidently enfeebled by its redundancies."—"I have thought it desirable that the facts in this case should be ascertained. You alone can give a full statement of them, to be communicated to whom you think proper. To arrive at *truth*, and to assure to every one his just portion of applause, are the sole objects of these remarks."

On the 6th of August Mr. Adams favoured me with an answer; and was pleased to communicate to me his short history of the Declaration of Independence, as it appears in the following extract from his letter of that date.

"Mr. Jefferson came into Congress in June 1775, and brought with him a reputation for literature, science, and a happy talent at composition. Writings of his were handed about remarkable, for the peculiar felicity of expression. Though a silent member in Congress, he was so prompt, frank, explicit and decisive upon committees, not even Samuel Adams was more so, that he soon seized upon my heart; and upon this occasion I gave him my vote, and did all in my power to procure the votes of others. I think he had one more vote than any other, and that placed him at the head of the committee. I had the next highest number, and that placed me the second. The committee met, discussed the subject, and then appointed Mr. Jefferson and me to make the draught; I suppose, because we were the two highest on the list. The sub-committee met. Jefferson proposed to me to make the draught. I said, I will not, you shall do it." [Then follows an

amicable altercation on this point; but Mr. Adams persisting in his refusal to make the draught,] "Well," said Jefferson, "if you are decided, I will do as well as I can." Very well; when you have drawn it up we will have a meeting. A meeting we accordingly had, and conned the paper over. I was delighted with its high tone, and the flights of oratory with which it abounded, especially that concerning Negro Slavery, which, though I knew his Southern Brethren would never suffer to pass in Congress, I certainly never would oppose. There were other expressions which I would not have inserted if I had drawn it up; particularly that which called the King a Tyrant. I thought this too personal; for I never believed George to be a tyrant in disposition and in nature: I always believed him to be deceived by his courtiers on both sides the Atlantic, and in his official capacity only cruel."

"I thought the expression too passionate and too much like scolding for so grave and solemn a document; but as Franklin and Sherman were to inspect it afterwards, I thought it would not become me to strike it out. I consented to report it; and do not now remember that I made or suggested a single alteration. We reported it to the Committee of Five. It was read; and I do not remember that Franklin or Sherman criticised any thing. We were all in haste; Congress was impatient; and the instrument was reported, as I believe, in Jefferson's hand-writing, as he first drew it. Congress cut off about a quarter part of it, as I expected they would; but they obliterated some of the best of it, and left all that was exceptionable, if any thing in it was. I have long wondered that the original draught has not been published. I suppose the reason is, the vehement Philippic against Negro Slavery. As you justly observe, there is not an idea in it but what had been hackneyed in Congress for two years before. The substance of it is contained in the declaration of rights and the violation of those rights, in the Journals of Congress in 1774. Indeed the essence of it is contained in a pamphlet voted and printed by the town of Boston before the first Congress met; composed by James Otis, as I suppose, in one of his lucid intervals, and pruned and polished by Samuel Adams."

NOTE D. PAGE 18.

Mr. Jefferson's Draught of the Declaration of independence. This is placed in the left-hand column; and the Declaration, as amended and adopted by Congress, in the right-hand column, of each page, for the convenience of comparing them.

Mr. Jefferson's Draught, as reported by the Committee to Congress.

A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA in General Congress assembled.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for

The Declaration, as amended and adopted by Congress.

A DECLARATION by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in Congress assembled.

Mr. Jefferson's Draught.

one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's god entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self evident ; that all men are created equal ; that they are endowed by their Creator with inherent and inalienable rights ; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness ; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying it's foundation on such principles, and organizing it's powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes. and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. but when a long train of abuses and usurpations, begun at a distinguished period, and pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies ; and such is now the necessity

Declaration as adopted.

This paragraph of the draught remained unaltered.

We hold these truths to be self evident ; that all men are created equal ; that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights ; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed will dictate, that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes ; and, accordingly, all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies ; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems

Mr. Jefferson's Draught.

which constrains them to expunge their former systems of government. the history of the present king of Great Britain, is a history of unremitting injuries and usurpations, among which appears no solitary fact to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest; but all have in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. to prove this let facts be submitted to a candid world, for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet unsullied by falsehood.

He has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

he has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has neglected utterly to attend to them.

he has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature; a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.

he has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

he has dissolved Representative houses repeatedly and continually, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

he has refused for a long time after such dissolutions to cause others to be elected, whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for

Declaration as adopted.

of government. The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having, in direct object, the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

Not altered.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and, when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

Not altered.

Not altered.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

Not altered.

Declaration as adopted.

Mr. Jefferson's Draught.
their exercise, the state remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without and convulsions within.

he has endeavoured to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither; and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

he has suffered the administration of justice totally to cease in some of these states, refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

he has made our judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices and the amount and payment of their salaries.

he has erected a multitude of new offices by a self-assumed power, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people, and to eat out their substance.

he has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies and ships of war, without the consent of our legislatures.

he has affected to render the military independent of, and superior to the civil power.

he has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation,

for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us;

for protecting them by a mock trial from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states;

for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world;

for imposing taxes on us without our consent;

for depriving us of the benefits of trial by jury;

Not altered.

He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies, without the consent of our legislatures.

Not altered.

He has combined with others, to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation,

Not altered.

for depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury;

Mr. Jefferson's Draught.

for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences; for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighbouring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these states;

for taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments;

for suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever; he has abdicated government here, withdrawing his governors, and declaring us out of his allegiance and protection.

he has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. he is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries, to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

he has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions of existence.

he has incited treasonable insurrections of our fellow citizens, with the allurements of forfeiture and confiscation of our property.

he has constrained others, taken captives on the high seas, to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

Declaration as adopted.

Not altered.

for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighbouring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it, at once, an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these colonies;

Not altered.

Not altered.

He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection, and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time, transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens, taken captive on the high seas, to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction, of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

Mr. Jefferson's Draught.

Declaration as adopted.

he has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating it's most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people, who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. this piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of a *Christian* king of Great Britain. determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. and that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which *he* has deprived them, by murdering the people upon whom *he* also obtruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the *liberties* of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the *lives* of another.

In every stage of these oppressions, we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms; our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. a prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a people who mean to be free. future ages will scarce believe that the hardness of one man adventured, within the short compass of twelve years only, to build a foundation so broad and undisguised, for tyranny over a people fostered and fixed in principles of freedom.

Struck out.

In every stage of these oppressions, we have petitioned for redress, in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Mr. Jefferson's Draught.

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. we have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend a jurisdiction over these our states. we have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here, no one of which could warrant so strange a pretension: that these were effected at the expence of our own blood and treasure, unassisted by the wealth or the strength of Great Britain: that in constituting indeed our several forms of government, we had adopted one common king, thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league and amity with them: but that submission to their parliament was no part of our constitution, nor even in idea, if history may be credited: and we appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, as well as to the ties of our common kindred, to disavow these usurpations, which were likely to interrupt our connection and correspondence. they too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity; and when occasions have been given them by the regular course of their laws, of removing from their councils the disturbers of our harmony, they have by their free election re-established them in power. at this very time too, they are permitting their chief magistrate to send over not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch and foreign mercenaries to invade and destroy us. these facts have given the last stab to agonizing affection; and manly spirit bids us to renounce forever these unfeeling brethren. we must endeavour to forget our former love for them, and to hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends. we might have been a free and a great people together; but a communication

Declaration as adopted.

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them, from time to time, of attempts by their legislature, to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them, by the ties of our common kindred, to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connexions and correspondence. They too, have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

Mr. Jefferson's Draught.
of grandeur and of freedom, it
seems is below their dignity. be it
so, since they will have it. the
road to happiness and to glory is
open to us too ; we will climb it
apart from them, and acquiesce in
the necessity which denounces our
eternal separation !

*We therefore the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, do, in the name, and by authority of the good people of these states, reject and renounce all allegiance and subjection to the kings of Great Britain, and all others who may hereafter claim by, through, or under them ; we utterly dissolve all political connection which may heretofore have subsisted between us and the parliament or people of Great Britain ; and finally we do assert these colonies to be free and independent states, and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. and for the support of this declaration, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

Declaration as adopted.

*We, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES of AMERICA, in GENERAL CONGRESS assembled, appealing to the supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, FREE and INDEPENDENT STATES ; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connexion between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved ; and that, as FREE and INDEPENDENT STATES, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which INDEPENDENT STATES may of right do. And, for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of DIVINE PROVIDENCE, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour.

Mr. Jefferson was manifestly displeased with the alterations made in Congress, in his Draught of the Declaration. In his letter of July 8, 1776, to Richard Henry Lee, he says, "I enclose you a copy of the "Declaration of Independence as agreed to by the house, and also as "originally framed. you will judge whether it is the better or worse "for the critics."—Far from being "worse," I think unprejudiced readers will pronounce the alterations and amendments, made by the "critics" in Congress, substantial improvements ; and that to those "critics" Mr. Jefferson is indebted for much of the applause which has been bestowed upon him as the AUTHOR of the Declaration.

NOTE E. Page 29.

Fifteen millions of dollars were the stipulated price for Louisiana ; not an immoderate sum for so extensive a territory. But *under the circumstances I have stated*, it will not be deemed a wild conjecture, that

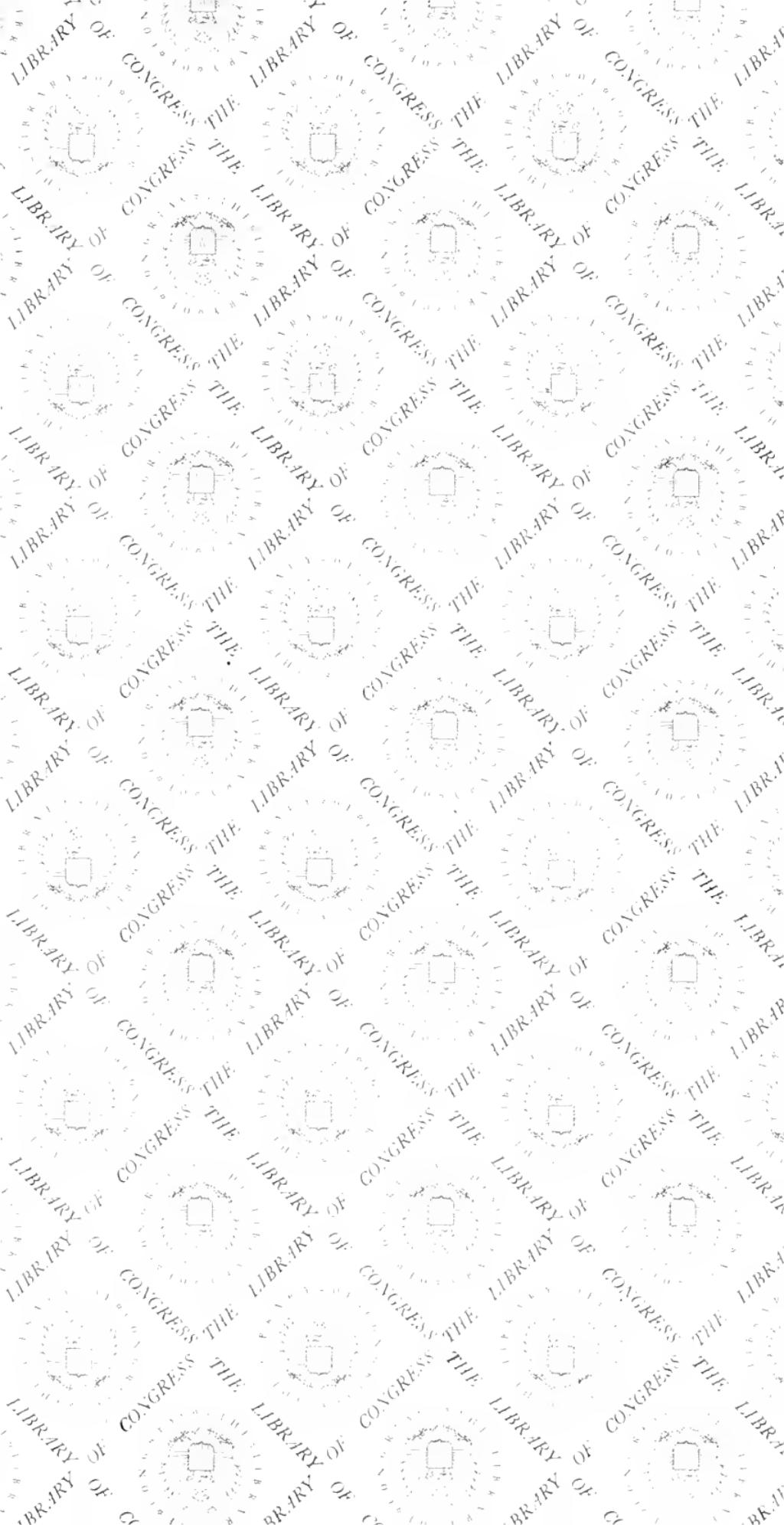
for the round sum of ten millions, the same object might have been accomplished.

Supplies of provisions and of other articles had been furnished by American merchants to the French Government, through the Agents of France and her Colonies, for which payments had not been made. Those merchants had also sustained great damages by a wanton or heedless embargo of their vessels in the ports of France. For these supplies and damages, our merchants were entitled to payments and indemnities. For these purposes, and for certain captures, three millions and three quarters of a million of the fifteen millions of dollars were appropriated. The captures, or prizes, were those only which on the 30th of September, 1800, had not been definitively condemned. This is the date of the treaty negotiated by President Adams's ministers, Ellsworth, Davie and Murray. The claims for other prizes, to the estimated amount of twenty millions of dollars, prior to that date, were by the same treaty abandoned.

In arranging the Louisiana business, three instruments in writing were employed. One was denominated a treaty, by which Bonaparte then First Consul of France, ceded to the United States the Province of Louisiana. By the second, called a convention, the United States stipulated to create six per cent stock, to the amount of eleven millions and two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, to be delivered to the French Government, or its agent. By the third instrument, also called a convention, the examination and ascertainment of the aforementioned debts and claims of American citizens, were provided for; and an American Board was constituted for that purpose. As France had no interest therein,—all the liquidated claims being to be paid out of the treasury of the United States, from the appropriated fund of three millions, seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars,—the examination and adjustment of the claims ought to have been made by American authority exclusively, without the contaminating interference of a French Bureau. But instead of this, express provision was made for such interference. The consequence was, the further plunder of American merchants; who, to obtain three fourths of their honest dues, were obliged respectively to sacrifice the other fourth in gratifications to the French Bureau. Such was the information I received in the midst of these transactions.* It might have been expected, from the high reputation of the late Chancellor Robert R. Livingston, as a statesman and a lawyer, that he would have taken care to guard the American merchants against the mischief here stated. He, undoubtedly, was the *Principal* in negotiating the Louisiana treaty and conventions. As the resident minister plenipotentiary of the United States at Paris, he could not have been unacquainted with the general character of the persons administering the French Government, and their train of under officers, against whose impositions the clearest and strongest guards were necessary.

* It is probable that divers honest claims were rejected by the French Bureau. A Boston merchant (an old friend of mine) informed me, that he had two claims—one for five thousand dollars, and another for fifty thousand dollars, both equally well founded. The small claim was allowed, and the large one rejected. His agent had not been authorized to give the twenty five per cent. gratification to the French Bureau. The rejection of such claims made room for others unfounded, for which higher gratifications may have been given.





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